

אָמֵן / Ἀμήν

Amen!

- Perhaps the single most common and most familiar word in both Jewish and Christian prayer is the acclamation “Amen!”, with which we conclude many of our prayers. Especially in the Pentecostal and Baptist traditions, “Amen!” has become a jubilant cry of approval and affirmation, shouted out with vigour during prayers and sermons.
- “Amen” is a Hebrew word, rooted in the three-letter root *’-m-n* (*’āman*), the original meaning of which is something like “to confirm, to establish, to uphold,” and, in certain verb forms, “to be established, to be faithful, to be worthy of trust, to be certain, to stand firm”. It is, therefore, a term associated with *solidity, trustworthiness and reliability*, and it is likely that the basic meaning of “Amen” is something like “It is true, it can be relied on, it is worthy of belief, it is as it has been said”. To say “Amen” would be to endorse the content of what has just been said, to offer one’s approval, one’s support and one’s own conviction that it *is*, in fact, the truth, and can be counted on as something sure. It is in this context that *Jesus* is referred to in the book of Revelation (3:14) as “the Amen, the faithful and true witness”. He is the one whose word will never fail, whose promises are sure to be fulfilled, who is everything that He claims to be, who is genuine and reliable on every level.
- Related to this root are several other Hebrew terms used in the Bible, including *’emûnah* (“reliability, trustworthiness, steadfastness, fidelity”), which is used frequently of God in the Old Testament:
 - Deuteronomy 32:4** The Rock, his work is perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful [*’emûnah*] God, without deceit, just and upright is he...
 - Psalm 37:3** Trust in the LORD, and do good; so you will live in the land, and enjoy security [*’emûnah*] (the Jewish Publication Society translates: “abide in the land and remain loyal”)
 - Psalm 119:30** I have chosen the way of faithfulness [*’emûnah*]; I set your ordinances before me.
 - Psalm 119:86** All your commandments are enduring [*’emûnah*]...
 - Proverbs 12:22** Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who act faithfully [*’emûnah*] are his delight.
 - Isaiah 25:1** O LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you, I will praise your name; for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure [*’emûnah ’omen*]
- In terms of its use in the New Testament, “liturgically, it is used as a particle of strong affirmation and assent at the end of a doxology: *this is indeed true* (Rom 11:36), or a prayer of thanksgiving: *that is the way it should be* (1 Cor 14:16); (2) used with *legō* [“I say”] to emphasize that what is being said is a solemn declaration of what is true (John 1:51)” (Friberg Greek Lexicon). One of the distinctive marks of the portrayal of Jesus in John’s Gospel is Jesus’ use of the double “Amen, amen...” (25x) to underscore the importance and truth of His teachings in general, or of a specific statement. Some translations render this as “Truly, truly” or “In all truth I say to you...” (older Protestant translations have “Verily, verily I say unto you”)
- In both Hebrew and Greek, the proper original pronunciation is “Ah-MAIN”; the “AY-men” pronunciation is a modern adaptation, found only in parts of North America.