

## Amen

The emphasis in teaching at Spring Valley Bible Church has been on the role of faith in the Christian life. It is therefore fitting that from time to time we look at individual words for “faith.” Today, let us look at the Hebrew word for “Amen.” It shows up in our passage Genesis 15:6.

**Genesis 15:6 Then he (Abram) believed in the Lord (Yahweh); and He (Yahweh) reckoned (imputed) it to him as righteousness.**

Since this is one of the most important verses in the Bible, it is appropriate for us to spend an hour focused on it via the word “Amen.”

**He believed.** The Hebrew verb is “Aman” which is where we get “Amen.” This is the first time this word is used in the Hebrew text of the Bible. As I previously said, this is also the first time the word “reckoned/imputed” is used in the Bible as also the word for righteousness. Paul quotes this verse in his argument for faith alone in Christ alone.

Some do not understand that “Amen” means “believe,” but instead “verily” or “truly” as it is translated in some places in the New Testament. It actually means both and more.

**John 6:53 So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, (literally Amen, amen) I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. (I am not going to explain this verse. It is just an example of a translation of “amen” as “truly.”)**

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This is a rich word. It has a variety of meanings in differing contexts. We should go back to the basic meaning to get an understanding of it in the Old Testament. I have included considerable information from Robby Dean mixed with my own research.

Biblehub is helpful to get us started.

**“Usage:** The Hebrew verb 'aman primarily conveys the idea of firmness, certainty, and reliability. It is often used in the context of faithfulness and trustworthiness, both in human relationships and in one's relationship with God. The term can imply a sense of being established or supported, as well as the act of believing or having faith.<sup>1</sup>”

Although Biblehub is helpful, we need additional explanation of the word and some examples of the various meanings. This lesson is not intended to be a rigorous analysis of the vocabulary word. It is my hope that this will give you a familiarity with the intensity of this word. “Amen” emphasizes “certainty.”

Robby Dean comments extensively on this verb as used in Genesis 15:6 -

“The first verb is he’emin, which is the hifil perfect of the verb to trust or believe. All the others were imperfect. It is important here because it makes us realize that God is not promising a covenant to Abram and then Abram gets saved because he believes it. This gracious gift of this promise to Abram is being given to one who is already a member of the family, already a believer. We are being reminded of this—“Now, remember, Abram had already believed in the Lord, and it had already been imputed to him as righteousness.” What the writer, Moses, is saying here is remember what the foundation for the promise is. It is the grace of God in giving Abram righteousness on the basis of his faith.”

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1 <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/539.htm>

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“We are looking at this verb *amen*, where we get our noun *amen* which we utter at the end of a prayer. It is one of two primary words for faith in the Old Testament: this word and the word *batach*. There are slight differences in the emphasis that each one brings to the table. We’ll just talk about *amen* tonight.”

“The root meaning of the Hebrew concept of belief has to do with stability or certainty. “believe something” means that I am certain, I am assured, I am positive that this is true. It is not like what you will hear from a lot of liberal theologians and liberals in other areas that say, “This is what we know for sure, but beyond that, that is in the realm of faith.” They always do that.”

“But the Bible sees faith as an element of knowledge in certainty. We have gone over this before that the way we come to learn things is one of four different ways.

- 1) “Through the use of reason, **rationalism**. Plato in the ancient world and Descartes in the more modern world, the Enlightenment. It is that reason alone can lead us to truth.
- 2) “**Empiricism** says reason cannot really get you outside of your own head (that was the critique of Descartes). You have to go with sense knowledge – what you see, hear, smell, taste, touch. Only what you can see, hear, smell, taste or touch can lead you to true knowledge.
- 3) “**Mysticism** (It always follows this flow in history. First you have rationalism and that fails; then you have empiricism and that fails. You can’t get there on the basis of logic, so let us leap there in mysticism.) Mysticism always follows the skepticism that comes from the failure of rationalism or empiricism.”

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“What they all have in common is that they all have a belief in the ability of the human brain to properly decode and interpret data, whether it is intellectual data or external data. They are all grounded in faith. Rationalism is built on faith assumptions. Empiricism is based on faith assumptions. Mysticism is based on faith assumptions. It is not faith vs. reason or empiricism. Rationalism, empiricism and mysticism are all grounded on an assumption, a belief that man can properly interpret the data without any outside input at all.<sup>2</sup>”

Let me slip in a tangential thought here. The word “hope” in the Bible is often portrayed by uninformed commentators as a wish for something. But we know from studying that Biblical “hope” is best translated as something like “confident expectation.” There is an affirmation, a declaration, of certainty. So with “amen.” Popular culture takes Biblical words and makes them into something they are not – uncertainty. Whereas, the Bible is saying it is CERTAIN!

“That is what is emphasized in this word *amen* which is the conviction of certainty in your knowledge. The root meaning of the Hebrew concept is that of stability and certainty. One of the places where we get evidence of this is in this verse 2 Kings 18:16 “At that time Hezekiah stripped the gold from the door of the temple of the Lord, and from the doorposts which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the King of Assyria [the foundational support of the pillars].””

“This is the time of the Sennacherib invasion into Judah, and Hezekiah has to pay the bribe to pay him off. Try to figure out where the word for faith (*amen*) is in this verse. The word that is translated “doorposts” really is the support of the pillars, the foundation. It is a noun form of the verb *amen*.<sup>3</sup>”

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2 <https://deanbible.org/new-testament-menuitem/romans-menuitem/message/2010-romans-039b/read>

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**2 Kings 18:16** At that time Hezekiah cut off *the gold* from the doors of the temple of the Lord, and *from the doorposts* which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria.

From Biblehub.com:

“**Corresponding Greek / Hebrew Entries:** The Greek equivalent often used in the Septuagint and the New Testament is πιστός (pistos), which also means faithful or trustworthy. This can be seen in passages like 1 Corinthians 1:9 (BSB): "God, who has called you into fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful."”

“**Usage:** The Hebrew word "omnah" conveys the idea of faithfulness, truth, or certainty. It is used to describe something that is reliable, trustworthy, or steadfast. In the context of the Bible, it often refers to the faithfulness of God or the reliability of His promises. “That is why that word is used there. Faith has to do with this sense of certainty.”<sup>4</sup>”

**Hebrews 11:1** Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

“In Hebrews 11:1 “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” It is a certainty of knowledge apart from empiricism or rationalism, but it is based on the authority of God’s Word telling us something. We believe it to be true, and it is just as real as if we had witnessed it in the laboratory, just as if we had measured and weighed it. Just because we have not seen or tasted or touched it or do not have the presuppositions to make up the major assumptions as the

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4 <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/547.htm>

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basis for the conclusion in a logical argument does not mean it is not just as true. It is just as true because God said it.”

**Assurance.** From Biblehub.org: “

“**Usage:** In the New Testament, "hupostasis" is used to convey the idea of a foundational reality or essence. It can refer to the underlying substance or actual being of something, as opposed to mere appearance. In a more abstract sense, it is used to denote confidence or assurance, particularly in the context of faith.<sup>5</sup>”

**Conviction.** From Biblehub.org:

“**Usage:** The Greek word "elegchos" primarily refers to the act of providing evidence or proof that leads to conviction or reproof. It is often used in the context of demonstrating the truth of a matter, leading to a change in understanding or behavior. In the New Testament, it is associated with the work of the Holy Spirit in convicting individuals of sin and righteousness.”

“**Cultural and Historical Background:** In the Greco-Roman world, the concept of "elegchos" was significant in legal and rhetorical contexts, where evidence and logical argumentation were crucial for establishing truth and persuading audiences. In the Jewish tradition, reproof and correction were integral to spiritual and moral instruction, often seen as acts of love and concern for one's community.<sup>6</sup>”

“In the Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, the writer makes the point that in the hifil stem, which is what we have here in Genesis 15, the verb *amen* basically means to cause something to be certain or sure, to be assured. This is the sense that we have for the way the word is used in terms of belief. We believe it because it is sure; there is a sense of

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5 <https://biblehub.com/greek/5287.htm>

6 <https://biblehub.com/greek/1650.htm>

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certainty in our minds that a statement is true. The other interesting thing about *amen* as opposed to *batach* is *amen* is used mostly in response to something said by someone else. God makes a promise, and we *amen*, we believe it. As opposed to passages where you are exhorted to trust in the Lord, that would be *batach*. *Amen* expresses a person's response to a statement or promise by God. Faith or belief then means that someone has a sense of assurance or certainty that something is true."

**Exodus 4:1 Then Moses said, "What if they will not believe me or listen to what I say? For they may say, 'The Lord has not appeared to you.'"**

"We have another example of how faith is used in Exodus 4, which is in the middle of a conversation that God is having with Moses giving him his commission to go to the pharaoh to free the Israelites. The chapter begins with God telling Moses to go, and Moses said, "Suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice." It is the response to a voice that comes out in that particular verse. God then gives him evidence. There is nothing wrong with basing faith on evidence. It is not a faith that is just a leap of faith. Leap of faith terminology is existential; it is not biblical. We do not believe something with no evidence. God gives all kinds of evidence in the Scripture."

**Acts 1:3 To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a *period of forty days* and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.**

"Luke tells us in Acts 1:3, after the resurrection Jesus presented Himself to the disciples and gave them "many infallible proofs" of the

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resurrection. God does not say to park your brain in neutral and believe something. There is evidence.”

Also, look at “doubting” Thomas:

**John 20:24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.**

**John 20:25 So the other disciples were saying to him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.”**

**John 20:26 After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus \*came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, “Peace be with you.”**

**John 20:27 Then He \*said to Thomas, “Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.”**

**John 20:28 Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!”**

**John 20:29 Jesus \*said to him, “Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.”**



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Faith is not blind faith. There reasons we believe.

**Exodus 14:31 When Israel saw the great power which the Lord had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in His servant Moses.**

“Here is another interesting point: we often see fear of the Lord and belief in the Lord used in parallel constructions in numerous passages. So that in those passages, fear of the Lord goes beyond simply awe or respect for God. It almost becomes a synonym for believing God because He is in authority.<sup>7</sup>”

Here is an another example that I provide from the Gospel of John why the Samaritans believed in Jesus:

**John 4:39 From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me all the things that I have done.”**

**John 4:40 So when the Samaritans came to Jesus, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days.**

**John 4:41 Many more believed because of His word;**

**John 4:42 and they were saying to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that**

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<sup>7</sup> <https://deanbible.org/new-testament-menuitem/romans-menuitem/message/2010-romans-039b/read> (all the quotes from Robby Dean came from this file)

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**we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world.”**

Now we switch to the word “faithful.” This example is also from the root word “aman.”

**Deuteronomy 7:9 Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments;**

Here God is “faithful.” He promises something. He does it. Here the lovingkindness of God is linked to His faithfulness.

Let us skip to Romans 4:19-21 in our discussion on faith. I want to get to some points that Herman made when studying this passage.

**Romans 4:19 Without becoming weak in faith he (Abram) contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah’s womb;**

**Romans 4:20 yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God,**

## **Romans 4:21 and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.**

From Herman:

“Then: he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in the exercise of faith, of just trusting God.”

“We follow the pattern of Abraham for imputation of God’s righteousness, and salvation So we can follow the pattern of Abraham in the development of our faith life.”

1. “To have this kind of faith, we must first come to the point where we have full confidence in God’s character, God’s person, His faithfulness, His love, His Omnipotence, His Plan; there is so much involved in developing this kind of confidence in God!
2. Having this kind of faith is the place of true security in an insecure world!
3. Having this kind of faith is the place of spiritual dynamics in your life.
4. Having this kind of faith is when you find reality in the being of God, all that He is!
5. Your relationship with God is more real than any person, any circumstance, any situation in your life! This is what kind of faith you can have.<sup>8</sup>”

If we have time, we should look at two examples of faith that are included in Hebrews chapter 11: Able and David.

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8 <https://www.springvalleybiblechurch.org/Audio/Romans/notes/Rom%204%2021%20ppt.pdf>

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**Genesis 4:2 And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.**

**Genesis 4:3 So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the ground.**

**Genesis 4:4 Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and for his offering;**

**Genesis 4:5 but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard.**

**Regard.** From Biblehub:

“**Usage:** The Hebrew verb "sha'ah" primarily means to look or gaze, often with the connotation of paying attention or regarding something with interest or favor. It can imply a sense of turning one's focus or consideration towards something or someone. In the context of the Bible, it is often used to describe God's attention or regard towards individuals or offerings.”

“**Cultural and Historical Background:** In ancient Hebrew culture, the act of looking or gazing was not merely a physical action but often carried deeper implications of favor, judgment, or consideration. The concept of God "looking" upon someone or something was significant, as it indicated divine attention, approval, or disapproval. This reflects the relational aspect of the Hebrew understanding of God, who is actively involved in the lives of His people.”

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Where does it use the word “faith.” The Hebrews gave illustrations, gave proofs of faith rather than point to something and say “faith!” Nevertheless, Hebrews 11 says:

**Hebrews 11:4 By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.**

Here, like in Romans, faith and righteousness are intertwined.

If we still have time, we should read 1 Samuel chapter 17, David kills Goliath using faith.

This study was not a rigorous point by point analysis of the Hebrew word for faith. It is not even “complete.” The point is for you to understand the word “Amen” is a word of conviction. I believe it. It is true. It is God’s Word!