

CREDO

- "I Believe" -

The Christian Faith in a Faithless World

Part 21

"Let the 'Amen' Sound
From His People Again!"

19 July 2020

Introduction: Where do we set our seal?

- We live in a time where it is becoming more common for us to be required to 'set our seal' on certain things. Certain political and cultural movements clamor for affirmation and support and imply the threat of 'cancellation' for those who may resist. In days such as these, we have an opportunity to declare what we believe to be true.

John 3:31-34—³¹ He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven is above all. ³² He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony. ³³ Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true. ³⁴ For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure.

Questions we must answer:

- (1) Has God _____ in human history? (2) Has God _____?

THE APOSTLE'S CREED
I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY
MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH,
AND IN JESUS CHRIST
HIS ONLY SON OUR LORD,
WHO WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT,
BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY,
SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE,
WAS CRUCIFIED, DIED & WAS BURIED,
HE DESCENDED TO THE DEAD,
ON THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN
FROM THE DEAD
HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN,
AND IS SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD THE
FATHER ALMIGHTY;
FROM THERE HE SHALL COME TO JUDGE
THE LIVING AND THE DEAD.
I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT;
THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH;
THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS;
THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS;
THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY,
AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING.
AMEN.

Key Point: Along with our brothers and sisters from around the world and with those who have come and gone before us, we _____ the truth of the faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints.

Confessing the Faith

Jude 3—Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

1. Essential Christian doctrine emphasizes God's _____ nature. (2 Cor. 13:14)

⇒ *The one true and living God exists eternally as three Persons.*

⇒ *Although the works of God are not divided, Scripture highlights the works of certain Persons of the Godhead.*

2. Essential Christian doctrine is centered on the _____ and _____ of Jesus Christ. (Phil. 2:5a-9)

⇒ *The Son added true humanity to His Person.*

⇒ *The work of the Son in His first advent is understood using the language of 'descent' and 'ascent.'*

⇒ *The work of the Son in His second advent is understood in light of His authority as Judge.*

3. Essential Christian doctrine emphasizes the biblical _____ and our place within it. (Matt. 28:18-20)

Key Point: Christian doctrine centers on our _____ with the God who has spoken and who has acted in human history for us and for our salvation.

Affirming the Creed: Amen!

"amen"— A transliteration of the Heb. אָמֵן (ä-men). The term is derived from another Heb. word (ä-man') which means to show oneself firm, dependable, to be durable or to last. It can also mean to know oneself to be secure or to have faith.

The Use of 'Amen' in Scripture

1. To say 'amen' was to confirm a statement from someone else as certain, valid, and binding.

1 Chron. 16:36—*Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting!" Then all the people said, "Amen!" and praised the Lord.*

2. To say 'amen' was to express hope or desire that what was said would be accomplished.

Jer. 28:6—*and the prophet Jeremiah said, "Amen! May the Lord do so; may the Lord make the words that you have prophesied come true, and bring back to this place from Babylon the vessels of the house of the Lord, and all the exiles.*

3. In the gospels, 'amen' is found only in the mouth of Jesus.

Mark 10:15—*"Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."*

John 3:3—*"Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

"By introducing his words with amen Jesus labelled them as certain and reliable. He stood by them and made them binding on himself and his hearers. They are an expression of his majesty and authority." —Hans Bietenhard (NIDNTT)

4. In the epistles 'amen' appears at the close of prayers and doxologies.

Rom. 1:25—*because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.*

1 Pet. 5:11—*To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

Key Point: By responding to the truth of the Apostles' Creed with the word 'amen' we are declaring it to be a _____ summation of the faith and recognizing our own personal connection to that truth.

"The 'amen' (meaning "truly, certainly") to which we come at last in the ancient baptismal creed is more than a period. It is an act of the whole body-soul unity, of trust, of confirmation. As the creed begins "I believe" (*credo*), it ends with, "Yes, so be it," "verily," "I confirm it" (*amen*)." —Thomas Oden, Classic Christianity

Concluding Thoughts

- Although we are individuals, as believers we are members of the Church and therefore we simultaneously confess the faith both _____ and _____!

"...the church is not a collection of atomistic individuals. It's not just a matter of many different voices joining together to sing a psalm or say the creed. Rather, the church speaks with one voice. It is intensely personal when I say, "I believe." I say the words as if the creed applied to me alone. But beneath and within and around my own personal "I," I hear the surge of a greater voice. There is a corporate "I" in which my own voice participates. This corporate "I" is the body of Christ—which really means Christ himself as the unifying head of a new human society." —Ben Meyers, The Apostles' Creed

Eph. 4:4-6—*⁴There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

- It is the Lord Jesus Himself who is the great and true _____!

Rev. 13:14b—*'The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation.'*

"Jesus Christ himself is personally God's own "Amen" (Rev. 13:14). "For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ. And so through him the 'Amen' is spoken by us to the glory of God" (2 Cor. 1:20)." —Thomas Oden, Classic Christianity