

# Rightly Dividing

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[ 0 : 00 ] That means a lot to us as Bible believers and as students of the Scripture. There's a verse in here that's really become popular in, I don't know if you want to call it our circle, or just in the, not in every Christian church that exists, but certainly in those that read and study and love the Bible, this one really jumps out because there's a strong teaching in verse 15 that I believe we have acknowledged and we have implemented, and many are just not as clued into this as ought to be.

So let's read it together. 2 Timothy 2.15, where the Bible reads, Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Now, no verse stands alone, and this is 15 comes after 14 and so forth. There's a Scripture to follow this. It's just not to be ripped out of its context alone.

But we can really isolate some things out of this verse without getting into the entirety of the book and the chapter, to know that there's a command given to study the word of God.

And that that man that studies that word is called a workman. And there's another command at the end of that. In studying it, there's a way to study it, and it says, Rightly dividing the word of truth.

[ 1 : 25 ] Now, there's a couple of things that we can deduce just from reading this and from the fact that Paul uses this language, is that, number one, there must be divisions in the word of truth for the Apostle Paul to tell Timothy to rightly divide it.

There has to be divisions. Else it wouldn't make any... What is he talking about? So there has to be some divisions to be observed and to be understood. Also, if he just said dividing the word of truth, Timothy, divide the word of truth.

Study and divide it. Then he could leave it up to Timothy to find these divisions and to make these... What do you want to call it?

Just teaching or something. But it doesn't say dividing. It says rightly dividing, which implies very clearly there's a right way to do it. Conversely, there's a wrong way to do it.

Paul warns and he commands Timothy to study the word of truth and to rightly, rightly, do it the right way, Timothy, divide the word of truth. Now, I know this is elementary to several of you here.

[ 2 : 33 ] I know that concepts is just, yeah, we get it. But not everybody has been brought up around the King James Bible. Not everybody has been trained in things that sometimes I take for granted that all of you do know and understand.

And you get like, yeah, you get it. You showed up here today. So you understand it all. And I know it's not the case. Not everybody understands all the teaching that involves with rightly dividing the word of truth.

I can't stress this enough, though. The first word of that verse, study, is the biggest part of all of it. If you don't study, you're never going to understand how to rightly divide the word of truth.

It requires much study. If you pick up your Bible and you're new to the word of God and you get saved, somebody leads you to Christ and they give you a Bible and you say, okay, so this is the word of God.

And you decide, okay, what do I do? Do I start in Genesis? Do I start? It's a huge book. And if somebody handed it to you and said, oh, wait, you're supposed to study and rightly divide that. And you'd probably say, okay, what?

[ 3 : 33 ] What? There's no way a new Christian can just have a Bible handed to them and somebody command them to study and rightly divide it that they'll have any idea what that means and what that looks like.

Maybe with much time and study, some things would start to reveal themselves to them. But the reality is most, if not all, need to be taught, need to be trained in some things that have been established by the people of God, from the word of God for years and years and years, which you

may happen to do if you were handed a Bible, is because of some publishers having an idea in their own mind that what Jesus said is more important than anything else, they put words in red in the Gospels.

And when you see a Bible that has words of Christ in red, I don't care if you have one or not, but if you do, then what you could be presupposed to believing is that, oh, there's red words here. These words are more important than the rest. I better give attention to these words. And a new believer can come through their Bible and absorb the word of God, but then come across the words that Jesus spoke in the Gospels and think, I better pay close attention to these now because they're in red letters seemingly more important.

And I want to caution you against that. I like to say the words of God are in black. That is, every word of God is pure. And I have a Bible that doesn't have red letters, and I'm not against the ones that do.

[ 5 : 02 ] I just want you to know that red letters do not mean anything over black letters. Can I say that black letters matter? Can I say that again? I don't know if I can say that.

But they do. The black letters are just as important as the red letters in your Scripture, from cover to cover, every word. So let's just dispel that and not allow you to be just a little bit deceived or confused, maybe, is a better word, when you're reading your Bible and you see this, and you think, well, I better put emphasis on that.

Is that what rightly divide means? Put Jesus' words above Peter's and Paul's and John's and Moses and all? No, that's not what that means. And so, I want to give you an example today of what it looks like to rightly divide the word of truth and an example in an area that you participate in every single day of your life, and that is what you consume, what you partake of or eat.

Because the Bible has something to say about it. It has a lot of things to say about it. And I want to use this as an example of how to rightly divide the word of truth. This is not...

If you were to study this as an entire subject or course, you would not look at it the way we do it today every time. There's some groundwork to be laid.

[ 6 : 21 ] But today, I'm not going to lay the groundwork. Rather, I'm just going to take you through an example. Let's go back to Genesis chapter 1. And just start from the beginning as if you were reading your Bible from the beginning.

And what you'll see is that God has given certain instructions for the diet of the man and the woman that he created and placed in the garden. He even tells them what they can and cannot eat.

And so, whether this lasts long or not is inconsequential to the moment that God gives these instructions. The instructions he gives were for Adam, for Eve, for the rest of the human race that follows them should they continue and observe his ways.

So in the beginning, what God created is this. Look at chapter 1 and verse 29. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed.

To you it shall be for meat. So you've been given herbs and fruit. So it's a vegetarian diet. We could safely just kind of classify it as that.

[ 7 : 37 ] A vegetarian diet is what God gave. Now what we're going to notice is that these commands of what can and cannot be eaten alter and change throughout the course of the Bible.

And when changes show up, we need to acknowledge that and say, Wait, what? It's okay here, but now it's not okay here. It's something else that's okay here. God changes the commands here in this particular area.

And so it's our job to locate and obey the guidelines God has given for us to follow today. Now, so here we are at the very beginning. I have to say there's a couple things to understand about this.

Some people take the notion that I believe a vegetarian diet is the most godly and holy thing that there is because that's the way God created man, Adam and Eve in the garden, what he said.

And so people take this concept, maybe trying to tie Bible to their belief, or maybe they're actually extracting their belief from the scripture, and they stand on that.

[ 8 : 44 ] And I would have to say, Well, hold on, hold on. That's true. That's what God instituted for Adam and Eve. That is what was in the mind of God for mankind. When he made the earth, when he made the fruit-bearing trees and all the herbs, and that was enough.

But what we're forgetting, perhaps, is that not too long after that, God cursed that ground that he commanded all of that to bring forth. He cursed that ground.

There was a fall. A drastic change took place, and now thorns and thistles are coming up, and now it's going to be the sweat of their brow and work and toil to be able to bring forth food out of the field. I would say I'm not so sure that I could take this vegetarian diet and say that it's the same diet that was in the Garden of Eden. I don't think it's even close.

Now, I don't have anything to put on that except for the curse from the Bible. I can't prove to you, but it would stand to reason in my mind, it's just my mind only, it would stand to reason that what God made come forth out of the ground back then was probably a whole lot, oh boy, the vitamins, the nutrients, the antioxidants, the whatever needed to be in there were in there to the full, to the max.

[10:00] I would imagine that partaking of that diet with those bodies was more than sufficient for what their body needed, and the human race would have needed going forward.

Come follow the fall, and sin entered the human race and curse, and now there's death on this planet. I don't think that food is quite getting it done the way it was designed to from the beginning. So let's move forward and notice a few chapters later, something changes. Look at chapter 9. Genesis chapter 9. So what God instituted originally was a vegetarian diet.

We're not trying to make any application on that. We're just studying the Bible and laying out some groundwork to see what is it that God allows and accepts today, and how did we come to this conclusion?

We're doing it by rightly dividing the word of truth. All right, Genesis 9. So there's sin, there's a curse, then there's more sin, so much so that God doesn't just curse, but rather He wipes out nearly all the human race, save eight.

[11:06] And we have chapter 9, verse 1. They get off the ark, and God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, and upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea, and to your hand are they delivered.

Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you, even as the green herb have I given you all things. But flesh and the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.

So now flesh, the flesh of animals. We have a vegetarian diet, but now animals or flesh is included and is acceptable as an addition to man's diet.

The only stipulation here in verse 4 is the blood. They're not to eat the blood. Now just because you get a steak that's red doesn't mean you're eating the blood. They are not to take the blood from the animal, like more likely collected in a basin or a cup and partake of that, because that's something forbidden.

That's the life of the beast. And so he says that ye shall, shall ye not eat. So there is something that is done there, but you cannot help but notice that there is a change in the diet that God is allowing or that God is commanding or instructing the human race.

[12:29] So first Adam and Eve, and this is what's allowed. And then it comes down to years later, Noah and his wife and his three sons and their wives, eight people, and there's new commands, new instructions.

It's a change. And it's also God has done something here to affect the relationship between man and the animals because he put the fear and the dread of mankind upon the beasts and the fowl and the fishes and the creeping things.

That's something God did. A different instinct is now altered or mutated into them. That's what God did that. And he allows man to eat animals, to eat flesh.

So there's, we know that as protein and we know that there's things that our bodies get from the flesh of animals. animals. And I imagine that if you lived in the Garden of Eden and you're Adam and Eve and the sons that followed and all of these long living men, that the animals were something, you didn't look at them as something tasty.

They were living creatures with personalities and lives and you just, you looked at a tree and plucked the fruit off the tree because it's ripe and it's delicious and the tree's gonna put some more out in its place.

[13:41] But you wouldn't think of taking the life of an animal. That would just repulse you because it's never been done. But now in Genesis 9, God opens the door here and says, no, you can partake of that flesh.

And once they figured out how to ground up some seasoning and spices and take care of that, there's a smell that came off that altar or came off of that, might have come off the altar when they burned it and said, wait a minute, never smelled that before.

But anyway, the case is, now they're able to eat flesh. Now turn to Deuteronomy chapter 14. So there's two distinctly different diets that God has commanded toward man.

And so far, they are just kind of divided by the flood. They're not divided by sin, but rather, it's the flood and that change that God instituted something new.

So now we're in Deuteronomy 14 and I really don't want to read the entirety of this passage, but starting in verse 3, you'll notice a few things here.

[14:51] Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing. These are the beasts which he shall eat. And the list goes and he says, you can eat these, you can eat these and he kind of gives some things, but then he says, some others are unclean.

And you'll notice the end of verse 7, they chew the cud but divide not the hoof, therefore they are unclean unto you. And so what we have here is a list of clean animals and unclean animals.

Verse 11 says, of all clean birds ye shall eat, but these are they of which ye shall not eat. And it gives a list. And so running this down, you can kind of follow, skim through and see from verses 3 to around 21, you can see that there are some things that can be eaten and things that cannot be eaten in regards to the animal kingdom.

Now up to this time, he just said, the beasts, the creeping things, the fowl, the fishes, they'll be delivered into your hand. You can get them. If you can catch them, you can have them.

But now he puts a stipulation, now he trims that list way down and says, no, these are acceptable to you. And he's talking to, notice verse number 1, ye are the children of the Lord your God.

[16:08] Verse 2, for thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself above all nations. We're talking about Israel. These commands are given to Israel, the nation.

Not given to the nations that are upon the earth, but rather to that particular nation. This therefore falls under the time of Moses' law. This is Deuteronomy.

This is Moses giving this law the second time to the children of Israel before they conquest or go and conquer the land with Joshua. So this is now a stricter diet than what he had given to Noah.

And this is instituted to the Israelites under the law. If you obeyed these commands, you were right with God or righteous. If you violated these commands, you were cut off from among the people, you were cast out from the congregation, and it was a violation of his law.

You were not righteous. And either you had to make atonement for that sin through a sacrifice, or you were out, and you had separated yourself from the covenant of God. So this is a third time where a diet is instituted into the Bible, a different one.

[17:21] And you could say, well, I believe vegetarian diet's right. Okay, fine. Do what you want to do there. There's no command that says you have to eat this or cannot. That's not there today.

But when God changed it, and then he changed it again for a peculiar people, Israel, we have to recognize these changes. Now come to Acts chapter 10. Acts chapter 10.

Remember, we're not really just, we're not trying to discuss biblically what we can order at the restaurant. That's not really the goal here. This is just an example, an exercise in rightly dividing the word of, in studying, looking up all the passages where this stuff shows up, and rightly dividing.

And we'll make some more comments as we finish. So Acts chapter 10. We're going to take a look at Peter. And he has a, he's having a vision.

It's an object lesson. So that God's going to open Peter's eyes to understand that the Gentiles that are an unclean people to the Jews, the Gentiles are now to be considered clean because of the blood of Christ, what God hath cleansed.

[18:39] They're no more common or unclean. And God's going to use an object lesson of animals, of clean and unclean beasts, to show him that the Gentiles are now acceptable to God, can be saved the same way as the Jews could be in this moment.

So look at Acts chapter 10 and start in verse 9. On the morrow as they went on their journey and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up about, upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour. He became very hungry and would have eaten.

But while they made ready, he fell into a trance and saw heaven opened and a certain vessel descending unto him as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners and let down to the earth,

wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth and wild beasts and creeping things and fowl of the air.

And there came a voice to him, rise, Peter, kill and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord, for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.

What does that mean? It means he's keeping and observing the law that was given to the Jews. He's obeying that. But now he's told he can do something that is in violation of that law.

[ 19 : 50 ] The voice spake unto him again the second time, God, what God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice. And the vessel was received up again into heaven.

What God hath cleansed. Look at verse number 28. Later he goes in and he's preaching to the Gentiles. He says, And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company or to come unto one other nation.

But God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. So the object lesson for Peter to get this was unclean beasts and he's being commanded to kill them and eat them, to partake of them.

And that would be a complete violation. If that was off the table still, then that would not be a good object lesson. But what God is not just showing in the preaching being made open to the Gentiles is the same thing with the beasts.

We can conclude, we can put this together. Because of Calvary, the Gentiles could now be cleansed. But also stipulations that were given under the law have now been rescinded or dropped and taken away.

[ 21 : 06 ] And I want to show you this more clearly. Look at 1 Timothy chapter number 4. 1 Timothy chapter number 4.

And this will be the last command that we look at and study by way of a difference in the Bible.

We've seen three clearly different commands about what you can partake of, what diet.

And then a transition in Acts. Go figure, it's in Acts. A transitional book. And then 1 Timothy chapter 4. And this is the place where we want to get some doctrine from the Apostle Paul.

Verse 1. Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies and hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats, notice this, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving, of them which believe, one, and two, know the truth.

So if you don't believe, you're not going to understand this stuff. If you don't know the truth, you're going to fall in line with them and think, oh, if I'm holy or if I abstain from these things. Not true. Look at verse 4.

[ 22 : 26 ] This is a qualifying statement, a very powerful statement, one to be understood, four and five. For every creature of God is good and nothing to be refused if it be received with thanksgiving for it is sanctified.

What's that mean? It's cleansed. If it was unclean, it's no longer unclean because it's sanctified by the word of God and prayer. You know what's common for us to do to bow our heads before we take a bop a meal?

It's because we want to receive it with thanksgiving according to verse number 4. And if you're in a place where I've heard of missionaries kind of almost semi-being forced for testimony's sake to eat some things that they otherwise would absolutely never touch, yet for testimony's sake and for the sake of reaching them with the gospel, they have prayed, God, sanctify this to my body.

Help me not to reject it and to have this turn into a bad thing. I want to see their souls saved. Anyway, that's kind of a maybe far out view of this.

But you cannot dismiss that Paul says every creature of God is good. Each creature has been sanctified. What was unclean is no longer to be considered unclean.

[ 23 : 49 ] And he's kicking against this false teaching, these doctrines of devils that say if you abstain from these meats that you're going to be right with God or more devoted or holy or sanctified or something like that.

Paul says that's not true at all. So we have no fear today of judgment based upon something, some meat, some animal, some creeping thing that we partake of.

Those that promote false doctrine will restrain somebody from eating certain foods. So this is a change. If it identifies with anything, it identifies with Noah's command after the ark.

It certainly isn't the same as the Garden of Eden. It absolutely is very different than what God gave to Israel. But what Paul is teaching the church here is there's nothing to be refused. Nothing. Every creature of God is good. He takes you right back to what Noah had. Now, there's a few verses I want to add to this that is going to help you because it's...

[ 24 : 54 ] Look at Romans 14. Let's go there first. A few verses that I want you to understand when it comes to this because now you can have some license or some liberty but we need to be careful how we use our liberty.

And so then Paul does put some... You might call them restrictions. It's not restrictions from God word in the sense of it's unclean but it has to do with your testimony and your relationship with other brethren or the world and so we have to always exercise discernment.

Now, starting in Romans 14 let's know this statement first. Verse 14. I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself.

So I can eat of that thing and it's not going to defile me or make me unclean. That's not the way this thing works. The kingdom of God is not meat and drink and that's not your spirituality.

So there's nothing unclean of itself. However, at the end of the verse but to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean to him it is unclean. If he has this conscience this belief this upbringing that that's wrong that's wrong that's wrong well you better stay off of that because you're violating your conscience unless God gives you light and reveals to you that there's nothing wrong with it.

[ 26 : 18 ] Nothing unclean about it. But if you violate your conscience then it is it's a fault that you have before God. Now look later I don't want to read all this for time's sake but as we continue in this chapter I'll read some of it.

Verse 15 But if thy brother be grieved with thy mate now walkest thou not charitably destroy him not with thy mate for whom Christ died let not your good be evil spoken of for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost for he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God and approved to men let us therefore follow after things which make for peace and things wherewith one may edify another for meat let us for your liberty to eat something that is okay destroy not the work of God all things indeed are pure but it's evil for that man who eateth with offense it is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth or is offended or is made weak and what he's telling you is that there's a weaker brother he's mentioned back in verse 1 him that is weak in the faith and as he describes this passage he doesn't have the understanding he's not grown and matured in the ways of God or in the Bible and therefore sees things as unclean or off limits and if he sees it as that then don't flaunt it in front of his face that you have liberty because he's not going to understand he's going to think oh you're safe so you can just do whatever you want and then he might be tempted it could be a stumbling block to him and so Paul says you need to exercise restraint in these areas if you can eat it eat it in the privacy of your home but not in front of somebody who's going to misunderstand it and then therefore be what's the word it uses destroyed his inner man his thoughts turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 8 one more passage here a few restrictions here about this teaching that Paul gives in regards to everything being good and acceptable nothing to be refused there are a few restrictions and they all are in respect of how partaking of those certain things are viewed in the eyes of others so now 1 Corinthians chapter 8 and this is the last passage we'll study here it's really the whole chapter that he deals with this thing now as touching things offered unto idols so this is an idolatrous people raised born and raised in idolatry and they were raised that you offer certain sacrifices to the idol just like the Jews offered sacrifices to God and the church today offers up spiritual sacrifices to God we don't offer up animal sacrifices but the heathen did and they would participate in a meal and this would be all surrounding this worship service to this idol or this unknown or this particular god and so there's sacrifices and then he says verse 4 as concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered and sacrificed unto idols we know that an idol is nothing in the world and that there is none other god but one so we know that we have knowledge we know that no matter what you offer them it doesn't do anything at all verse 7 says how be it there is not in every man that knowledge for some with conscience of the idol into this hour eat it as a thing offered unto the idol like they're really worshipping here and their conscience being weak is defiled but meat commendeth us not to god nor for neither if we eat are we the better neither if we eat not are we the worse but take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak he's going to go on and show you that verse 11 for though thy knowledge for through thy knowledge you know you can do this shall the weak brother perish for

whom Christ died you sin against the brethren you wound their weak conscience that's why I said conscience back in Romans 14 because that's what you're wounding or destroying that's what's perishing here is they're just not mature in the Lord and in the word of God and so you're offending them you're messing them up when they don't understand so Paul's conclusion in verse 13 wherefore if meat make my brother to offend I'll eat no flesh while the world standeth lest I make my brother to offend so that's that's some restriction is to exercise discernment how this affects others whether it's a weaker brother whether it's the lost that thinks this is an acceptable thing and now here you are naming the name of Christ and participating with them in it it could make you look pretty bad it could destroy your testimony Paul says I know and I'm persuaded by the Lord Jesus there's nothing unclean nothing to be refused so there's been a change what we've looked at here today is the evolution it's not the right word today but the evolution of diet in the word of God what we've noticed is it's not all the same from Genesis to second place in Genesis to Deuteronomy we could add Exodus in there the two being the same then moving through the transition coming into this

New Testament church age material that Paul gives to us God changed the rules and so now I handed you a Bible and said okay I'm glad you're saved make sure you don't violate the word of God make sure you do all things right in the sight of God and as you start reading the first thing you read is that God instituted a vegetarian diet I've been sinning my whole life and then you read a few wait wait wait no he said it's okay you read a few more no no it's not okay now what are you going to do you've got different commands what do we rightly divide we place that where it belongs in the garden of Eden before there was any sin before any curse before a fall before they expelled there was a command given but as time changed and after the flood God changed it so we have to place that in another division another place and recognize what God said to Noah was different than what he said to Adam furthermore there's other things instituted there about if somebody sheds blood by my man shall his blood be shed they call it human government man governing himself not God handling everything that every sin and thing that happens on the earth things are changing as you go through the scripture and when you get to the New Testament when you get the writings of the apostle Paul he lays some things out for the church that have completely nullified and dismissed the law and the teachings of Moses to the Jew we don't find ourselves observing their holy days their rituals their feasts we don't find ourselves concerned with their sacrifices and we definitely don't find ourselves being concerned with their diet because every creature of God is good and nothing to be refused why?

because it's been sanctified by the word of God and prayer and so understanding this it takes study it takes study if I just handed you a Bible and said figure it out for yourself it might be a big ask it'd be probably you'd be overwhelmed with just even understanding what all 66 of these books are and all the different teachings within them so when you learn how to do this we learn how to place teachings or commands from God to man in categories to who is he whom I guess I should say whom is he speaking to to whom is God speaking in this case he's speaking to born again Christians that have been saved by the gospel of Jesus Christ with the apostle Paul's teaching and the doctrine of that teaching applies to us to me that is under that I am not under the law I am not in the garden of Eden I'm not going to try to fit my my following or my beliefs my doctrine into those categories because that's not me and it never will be so we divide by there's a lot of other ways to look at this but this is just a sample okay

[ 34 : 45 ] I hope that is just one that you can understand the differences they're clear and then understand the need to divide and to place the right command in the right place and if we carry this forward there's a whole a whole study we could do that would go weeks and weeks and weeks on trying to introduce this softly and build some blocks on top of others that can really help you get a good solid understanding of how to do this what this looks like and how not to cross the lines the dividing lines that God placed they're not written in the book it's not that clear it takes study and as you study then you can kind of do a linear timeline and you can start to see the progression and the change over time from the garden of Eden till today and even more into the future as things progress and change as God does that he's the one that has changed how he deals with man it's his changing it's not us saying we wanted to do this no God made the change he gave the commands through his preachers given by inspiration of God and it's our job to recognize this to study it and then to rightly rightly rightly divide

Father as we dismiss this Sunday school hour pray that what was said was received and beneficial to all and Lord give us wisdom and discernment in this area this book is far holier than any of us and it's pure and Lord it's tricky too it's easy for us to be misled and to follow teachings of others when they make sense and yet they don't really wash with the entirety of the book so God give us diligence and discernment and help us to resolve issues that we have that we don't understand please give us that wisdom and understanding and knowledge in the words of truth we pray in Jesus name Amen Amen