

To Be a Man Like Hur

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At the “place of rest” (Rephidim), a battle and a feat of endurance ironically took place. The enemies of God’s people engaged in cowardly guerrilla warfare, targeting the stragglers of the Israelite hoard. The weak and the tired became victims of Amalek, who did not fear God (see **Deuteronomy 25:17-19**). The faithful general Joshua, with the chosen men of Israel, fought the Amalekites in the valley, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to a mountain. When Moses held up his hands (perhaps in prayer; see **2 Timothy 2:8**), Joshua prevailed. However, when his hands became weary and drooped, the Amalekites prevailed. At Rephidim, the yet-to-be battle-tested Israelites saw a visual representation of a spiritual truth. When God was with them, they would prevail. When God was not with them, they would fail. The toll of isometric (holding steady) muscular action is a formidable task that pushed Moses to his physical limit. At first standing, then seated on a rock, and finally with the support of Aaron under one arm and Hur under the other, his hands remained steady until the going down of the sun. At the conclusion of the battle, the Lord sent forth a powerful promise that Amalek would be utterly blotted out (which was nearly botched by King Saul in **1 Samuel 15**), and Moses commemorated an altar named “The LORD is My Banner.” At Rephidim, we learn a lesson applicable to all ages: victory in the valley is secured on the Mountain (see **Ephesians 6:10-13**).

To call Hur a minor Old Testament character may overstate the role he plays in the narrative of the Pentateuch; yet, in a few brief mentions, we find him with the rulers of the early Israelite nation. Other than supporting Moses’s arms during the battle of Rephidim, Hur also appears in the narrative at Sinai. This time, instead of being on the mountain, he is left in the valley. Moses went up the mountain to receive the law written on tablets of stone. Aaron and Hur are left as leaders of the people with the instruction to “wait” (see **Exodus 24:13-14**).

Waiting is difficult for humans. Peter, James, and John struggled to wait on the praying savior (see **Matthew 26:36-46**). In **Psalms 27**, David is waiting on the Lord during some distress (perhaps in a mortal struggle with Saul, the Lord’s anointed, whom David would not harm; this feeling was not mutual, see **2 Samuel 19:10-12**). Through all this, David waited on the Lord. At Sinai, God’s people failed to simply wait on the Lord. After a duration of 40 days (see **Deuteronomy 9:9**), they became impatient and demanded that Aaron make gods “to go before them.” Their rejection of the Lord as God here is eerily similar to their rejection of him as king (see **1 Samuel 8:19-20**). In both these cases, the people preferred a physical figurehead to the Spirit of God (see **John 4:24**). Aaron gave in to the people’s demand and created for them a calf of gold, a sin to later be copied and multiplied by Jeroboam in the false worship set up at Bethel and Dan.

Where is Hur? Aaron is held responsible for the actions of the people under his leadership, although he greatly downplayed

his personal role, as “the calf came out of the fire” (rather than him crafting it). Would not Hur be equally culpable as a leader of the people? The divine narrative makes no more mention of him (except in chronologies), and so officially, the mystery remains unresolved. Interestingly, the Talmud (which is of admittedly dubious reputation) states that Hur was killed for opposing the creation of the calf. Although

we can not be sure about the veracity of this claim, it does resolve some of the questions in the text. It would give us a possible reason for Aaron's willingness to submit to the people, and it would explain why Hur disappears from the text in **Exodus 24** and why he is not held responsible for the people's disobedience. In any event, the courage of a true follower of God to stand up before deadly force is woven throughout the pages of our Bible. This godly courage takes us into the fires of a pagan king (see **Daniel 3**), to the sword of a nominal Israelite king (see **Jeremiah 26:20-23**), to hurled stones of mob violence (see **Acts 7**), noting only the bravery of a few. They serve as a beautiful example that we all must pass through persecutions of varying intensity on the way to the reward (see **2 Timothy 3:12**).

There is yet one more lesson we can learn from the life of Hur. Hur was the grandfather of Bezalel, who God divinely inspired to craft the instruments of the temple (see **Exodus 31:2, 35:30, 38:22; 1 Chronicles 2:19**). It seems certain that Hur was alive during Bezalel's youth. After all, Hur's last mention is **Exodus 24**, and Bezalel is apparently old enough for this service by **Exodus 31**. Grandparents should not neglect the opportunity God has given them to inspire first their children and later their grandchildren. Paul, when seeing the faith of the evangelist Timothy, saw the faith as originating in his grandmother Lois, then passing through Eunice before reaching him (see **2 Timothy 1:5**). Perhaps we have something similar here: faith passing from Hur to his son Uri, and finally to his grandson Bezalel. Why did Paul see the faith first in Lois? Was her mother not faithful? Perhaps, but just as likely, Lois was the oldest member in the line who had ample opportunity to instill virtue upon Timothy.

When God grants the blessing of many days, and you have the opportunity to see your grandchildren, do not discount the influence you may have on them. The Old Law hints at this: the generation preparing to enter the promised land is commanded to make the works of the Lord known to their children and their children's children (see **Deuteronomy 4:9**). The raising of godly descendants is one the Bible consistently addresses, from creating standing stones, to open discourse of God's mercy (see **Joshua 4:1-7**), to allegorizing offspring, to arrows directed by their parents and shot into the future (see **Psalms 127:3-5**). Grandparents who are godly examples to their progeny can be a valuable asset in this process.

While we know little about Hur, we know he was always listed among God's chosen leaders, Moses and Aaron. You may not be a Moses or an Aaron (the New Testament reveals Jesus was the next Moses; see **Acts 3:22**), but God will always need "Hurs" to stand beside his leaders, holding their hands steady. We also see Hur have a faithful grandchild and likely a faithful son. This indicates that he took care of his private life along with his public life. Men chosen to lead God's people are first (and continue to be) invested in *their* homes (see **1 Timothy 3:4, Titus 1:6**). In every age and every place, God needs men like Hur. Will *you* be a man like Hur in your local congregation?