

## BEING GOD'S PERSON

It's Hur, H - U - R, like, *Ben Hur*...the famous movie. The spelling I'm sure of. But after reading about myself in both religious and history books, even I'm not sure who I am!

Exodus 38:22 says, "Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made everything the Lord commanded Moses." I am of the tribe of Judah, and I am the grandfather of Bezalel. Remember that, it's important.

According to Rabbinic tradition, I was the son of Miriam, which would make me the nephew of Moses and Aaron. That tradition also indicates that Caleb married Miriam and was my father. So, Caleb and Miriam, mom and dad. However, the historian, Josephus, states I was the husband of Miriam, not her son. So, somewhere, someone's got something mixed up. But it's definitely H-U-R.

The Bible portrays me as a close companion of Moses and Aaron until I mysteriously disappear from the Exodus account. Just poof.

The Bible features me in two important events. First, the Israelites have begun the Exodus, and are camping at Rephidim. Wild desert people, the Amalekites, believing us to be helpless, attack us. Moses tells Joshua, his second in command, to take some men to fight them. So, I'm a skeptic. I envision a bloody scene of a tribe of well-armed, experienced warriors, not us, annihilating a bunch of recent slaves, us. Then, I remember Pharaoh and his armies not too long before. Drowned when God caused the Red Sea to "unpart".

The fighting begins, Moses takes the Staff of God and goes and stands on top of a nearby hill, along with Aaron and me. As long as Moses holds the staff high, the Israelites prevail. When he gets tired, the staff drops and the Israelites get thwacked. Prevail, thwack, prevail, thwack. We move a stone over for him to sit on, but still he tires, lowers his staff. Aaron and I move in on either side, we hold his hands up, until sunset when the Israelites complete the victory. May not sound like much to you, but Moses is 80, and Aaron is even older!

Several weeks later, the Israelites camp in the desert in front of Mount Sinai. One of the most important events in all of world history is about to happen, and we don't know it. God, the God who created the universe, is about to make us an offer we will rush to accept.

Moses goes up on the mountain to talk to God. Always gives the rest of us the heebie jeebies because of all the thunder and storm clouds up there. Moses, the chaos doesn't faze him. After a few preliminaries, God makes an unbelievable offer. "IF you obey me completely and keep my covenant, then out of all the nations, you will be my treasured possession, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation."

Moses takes this incredible deal back to the people, and they agree. They want to become God's people. Together they respond, "We will do everything the Lord has said."

The unimaginable has just happened. He's a real god. The One True God. God has agreed to be our God, to protect us! To provide for us! If we keep our side of the deal. We have agreed to take him as our one and only God and to keep our side of the deal by obeying everything he says. No nation has ever had a better offer.

I know the stories of our ancestor Abraham, who believed that God has the power to do what he says he will do. I am convinced God will do what he has said he will do. But...I am skeptical. Skeptical of my own people. God seems to be skeptical, too. With good reason, it turns out.

God has the people gather together, and he gives them the Ten Commandments, and a lot of other commandments, too. When he is finished, my people, again, agree to do everything the Lord says. Moses writes it all down in the Book of the Covenant, and reads it to the people. Once more, the people say they will obey everything the Lord has said.

Skeptic talking here, but maybe you've gotten so used to being a Christian that maybe you forget what an incredible privilege it is to belong to the one True God...for him to be your God and you to be his people, or person as it were...to be God's treasured possession...to be his nation of priests.<sup>1</sup> Could you have a more important goal, a more important purpose?

God loves us so much that he tells us *exactly* how to be his people. He tells us *exactly* what is good, and exactly what is evil. He tells us *exactly* what values to have; how to

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<sup>1</sup> Revelation 1:6

spend our time, our resources, our life. God tells us precisely how to follow him with our whole hearts.

Pagan gods that other peoples worshipped, those gods were seen as transactional and capricious, you had to do all this stuff, and then if they felt like they would help you, or maybe they wouldn't, or maybe they would, maybe they needed a little entertainment for their boredom, so they messed with you. You just never knew. But those false gods were NEVER loving toward their followers. Never relational. The one True God separates himself from any other purported god with a new model as creator and father. We respond by loving him, and loving each other. The question, for you, is what does that look like?

Back to Mount Sinai. Moses, Aaron, Joshua, seventy elders and others start up the mountain. Moses has the seventy elders wait until he comes back from meeting with God. Which we're happy to let him do it. He says Aaron and I will wait with them, resolve any disputes that need to be resolved. Aaron *and Hur* will resolve any disputes...Aaron and H-U-R. (sadly) It is the last time I am mentioned in the Bible except for genealogies.

Moses stays on the mountain for forty days and nights. God gives him additional commandments, detailed instructions for the priests, and for building the Tabernacle. His home with his people. As part of the Tabernacle instructions, Moses is told that God will give Bezalel supernatural talents in artistic designs in the use of gold, metal, precious stones and wood. Bezalel, my grandson, will be making God's home!!!

Did God choose Bezalel to do that because he is a nice guy, or because he is already a talented craftsman in metals and stones? Where do you think he could have learned that... his father...who could have learned it from his father... yours truly? The Bible doesn't say so, but it does seem logical especially for the culture at that time.

Anyway, back to Moses and God's people. Moses is gone so long the people become rebellious. As a mob, they gather around Aaron and convince him to make a statue for them to worship. Enter the Golden Calf. It's been less than forty days, not even, and my people turn against God completely. They trade the ultimate dream of being God's people, for worshiping a metal cow and having a big party.

Back to me. I was a close friend and relative of Moses and Aaron. Aaron and I were to settle disputes for the people while Moses was gone on the mountain. I may have been a metal craftsman. I am not a part of this story of Aaron making of the golden calf, and I am not talked about anymore in the Bible. Suspicious?

Perhaps that is why there is a story floating around the ancient rabbis that I am with Aaron when the people want the golden calf made. That when I refuse to make said golden calf, the crowd kills me. With me being out of the way, Aaron cowers, pun intended, to the will of the crowd. The Bible doesn't say this, but... intriguing, nevertheless.

I watched a nation of people become God's people, his treasured possession, his holy priests. Then I saw them throw it all away. How could they do that, you ask? How could anyone do that, I ask? But the real question here, and I have to ask...would you? Have you?