

Coach House Church BEACONS

UNITED WE STAND

17TH JUNE 2021

Now as someone with fewer follicles each year, I am obviously not going to be a candidate for the most luxurious hair 2021. My hair began to recede many years ago, I suspect due to it being subject to long periods in chlorinated water during my swimming days, or the peroxide from my 'hair metal' years of long shaggy perms!
Either way I'm losing my hair. My outward appearance is changing and maybe not for the better.

I'm fairly sure though, that my inward appearance has changed faster and for the better, since knowing Jesus and allowing Him to conform me to His standard.

One of the things we learn on the way is that God has a habit of revealing himself to us and the more we recognise Him the more we will come to appreciate how much revolves around him. Sometimes we can obviously see what is going on, other times it can be hidden and takes some digging and closer attention to uncover the truth.

I suppose most of us have heard of the story of Moses in the Old Testament, where he is told to lead the people of Israel against their enemies (in this case the Amalekites) by holding his staff up in the air. We can read this particular story in the book of Exodus chapter 17

Exodus 17:9-13 (NLT)

(Moses said) Tomorrow, I will stand at the top of the hill, holding the staff of God in my hand."

So, Joshua did what Moses had commanded and fought the army of Amalek. Meanwhile, Moses, Aaron, and Hur climbed to the top of a nearby hill.

As long as Moses held up the staff in his hand, the Israelites had the advantage. But whenever he dropped his hand, the Amalekites gained the advantage.

Moses' arms soon became so tired he could no longer hold them up. So, Aaron and Hur found a stone for him to sit on. Then they stood on each side of Moses, holding up his hands. So, his hands held steady until sunset. As a result, Joshua overwhelmed the army of Amalek in battle.

Now, this all seems innocuous enough.

Moses the leader of Israel has sent Joshua (his trusted second, who was being trained to take over), to lead the Israelites against the army of King Amalek, who had been harassing and threatening God's people.

The strange bit I suppose, is that Moses will stand on top of a hill and hold up a staff and whilst it was held high the Israelites would prevail in battle, but if his arms dropped and the staff fell then the Amalekites would start to overcome the Israelites.

There seems to be a lot at stake here (no pun intended) and a lot was dependent upon Moses obvious ability to maintain the staff held high. So, there must be more to the story.

There are a couple of obvious conclusions, and maybe a couple of not so clear conclusions which need to be dug out.

The fairly obvious ones are that:

The staff represented supernatural power as it was the staff that God had turned into a snake during the exodus from Egypt. God has used it to show His superior strength and majesty and it had become a symbol of God's leading.

It was also used to turn the Nile red with blood and in all instances of Gods power being shown, it was the staff being used either to strike or to be held high that signalled Gods powerful interventions.

We can read about these instances from Exodus chapter 4 onwards. What becomes apparent is that the staff is a significant sign that power had been given.

Both Moses and Aaron had a staff that God used to bring attention to Himself. It was never about the person holding it!

Exodus 4:1-5 (NLT)

But Moses protested again, "What if they won't believe me or listen to me? What if they say, 'The LORD never appeared to you'?"

Then the LORD asked him, "What is that in your hand?"

"A shepherd's staff," Moses replied.

"Throw it down on the ground," the LORD told him. So, Moses threw down the staff, and it turned into a snake! Moses jumped back.

Then the LORD told him, "Reach out and grab its tail." So, Moses reached out and grabbed it, and it turned back into a shepherd's staff in his hand. "Perform this sign," the LORD told him. "Then they will believe that the LORD, the God of their ancestors—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—really has appeared to you."

So, the staff was a sign of Gods power – not Moses ability.

Therefore, the obvious conclusion is that whilst the staff was held high, God was shown to be in control.

So that Moses could complete this task, two people were assigned to stand with him and help. Aaron is fairly obvious because he was the High Priest and Moses' brother, but the other is less so, but never the less of importance,

His name was Hur (not Ben Hur – just plain old Hur) – except he wasn't just plain old Hur. We have to dig to find out why he is significant.

When we do, we read this from later on in Exodus:

Exodus 31:2 (NLT)

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Look, I have specifically chosen Bezalel son of Uri, grandson of Hur, of the tribe of Judah."

Why is this important? Well, because the line of Judah is the line from which God promises a King for Israel.

Maybe the significance of this still doesn't show through, so let's put Moses, Aaron and Hur on a hill and see what they were doing.

Moses was God's prophet; Aaron was God's priest and Hur was of the Kingly line of Judah and they stood together on a hill holding arms aloft in order to gain victory Remind you of anything?

Let's just add something else into the mix ... The Amalekites under King Amalek, we are told were harassing the Israelites from behind. In other words, they were picking off the back markers in the community of Israel – going after the tailenders, the weak or the less defended

Here is Gods words about them in Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy 25:17 (NLT)

"Never forget what the Amalekites did to you as you came from Egypt. They attacked you when you were exhausted and weary, and they struck down those who were straggling behind. They had no fear of God."

Therefore, when the LORD your God has given, you rest from all your enemies in the land he is giving you as a special possession, you must destroy the Amalekites and erase their memory from under heaven. Never forget this!"

Just reading this reminds me that our enemy today, the devil, prowls around looking for someone to devour. He specialises on attacking when we are weak. But God had a plan for the King Amalek and He has a plan for the devil.

Both involve a hill, a prophet, a priest and a King.

Unlike Moses, we are told that God never grows weary. Jesus stretched out His arms on a wooden cross. He was our King, priest and prophet who never tires and has won the complete victory over the devil.

It is amazing what can be seen when we look back. What hope there is in God's word, but ultimately, what promise is contained for us.

This may be preaching to the converted, but it is good to be reminded that Jesus gained the victory when he took all sin and death and God's punishment on himself, so that we would be free from them all.

The Battle belongs to the Lord, just as it was for Moses against the Amalekites. God's staff was held high against the enemy.

Human effort was supported by those around, and today we help each other to stand against the enemy, knowing that God through Jesus, has won the victory.

United we stand.



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