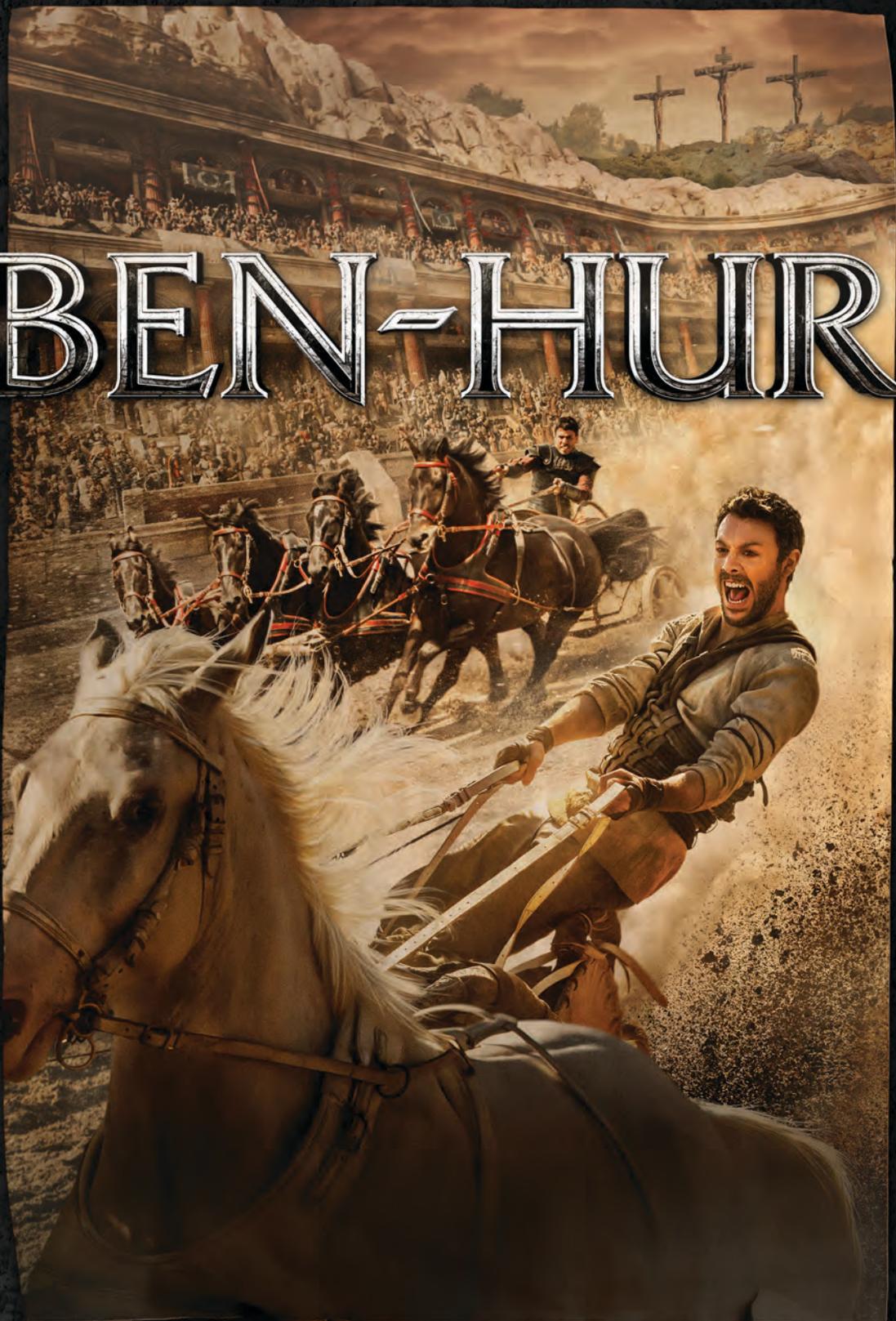


FAITH DISCUSSION GUIDE

A movie poster for the film 'Ben-Hur'. The central image shows a dramatic chariot race in progress. In the foreground, a man with a beard and intense expression is driving a white horse, leaning forward with his mouth open as if shouting. Behind him, several other chariots with dark horses are competing. The background features a large, tiered stadium filled with spectators. In the distance, three crosses are visible on a hillside under a cloudy sky. The title 'BEN-HUIR' is written in a large, ornate, metallic font across the middle of the image.

# BEN-HUIR

FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT. FINISH THE RACE.  
IN THEATERS AUGUST 19, 2016

ENTER TO WIN A TRIP FOR TWO TO ISRAEL | [BENHURSWEEPSTAKES.COM](http://BENHURSWEEPSTAKES.COM)

On August 19, 2016 Paramount Pictures and MGM Studios will release a new, major motion picture, Ben-Hur. A fresh imagining of the timeless 1959 classic, Ben-Hur tells the riveting story of two brothers who become mortal enemies until a chance encounter with Jesus of Nazareth leads them to healing.

Ben-Hur is rich with universal Christian themes of love, forgiveness, justice and redemption. We encourage you to see the film with your family, friends, and church groups and are pleased to offer you these companion teaching materials for your ministry.

This guide offers four scenes from the film, related Bible verses, and topics for discussion. You'll find downloadable links to the movie scenes at our faith resources website: [ShareBenHur.com](http://ShareBenHur.com).

For a richer film experience, we recommend that you use the guide in your ministry before the August release. You can cover topics individually or sequentially over a number of weeks. Then, we hope you'll consider taking a group to the movie so that you can enjoy a meaningful discussion afterwards.

Thank you for your support of this important and inspiring film.

God bless,

♥ Roma Downey  
Mark Burnett

Roma Downey and Mark Burnett





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# A NEW MESSAGE OF RADICAL LOVE: JESUS THE CARPENTER



WATCH THE  
COMPANION CLIP  
[SHAREBENHUR.COM/CLIPS](http://SHAREBENHUR.COM/CLIPS)

Early in the story, Esther and Judah are in the marketplace, where the Romans have captured a zealot and announced that he will be crucified. As Judah bitterly complains that the zealots are bringing, not freedom, but Rome down upon them, a simple carpenter working nearby speaks up. He tells Judah, “There is freedom elsewhere. Love your enemies. God is love. He made us to share that love. Forgive them and you will be forgiven.”

## BIBLE THEME: JESUS’ RADICAL MESSAGE OF LOVE

We first see Jesus as a simple carpenter. His radical message of love, which Judah calls ‘progressive,’ might even appear outrageous given that the oppressed Jews detest their Roman occupiers. Yet this seemingly impossible challenge resonates with Esther and it will gain Jesus many followers in the time ahead.

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## QUESTIONS TO REFLECT UPON

1. When Jesus tells Judah that real freedom comes from loving and forgiving your enemies, what does he mean?
2. Have you ever had an experience when you were challenged to forgive someone who had wronged you? Did doing so resolve the situation?



## BIBLE VERSES:

And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

**MARK 11:25 (ESV)**

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

**ROMANS 12:14 (ESV)**

But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.

**LUKE 6:35 (ESV)**

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

**1 JOHN 4:7-8 (ESV)**

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## TEACHABLE CONCEPTS

- Anger and hatred are the lies that imprison us and turn us against one another; love is the freedom that liberates us.
- God has a path and a plan for us and love will show us the way.



## LOVE AS REVOLUTION: JESUS PROTECTS THE LEPER



WATCH THE  
COMPANION CLIP  
[SHAREBENHUR.COM/CLIPS](http://SHAREBENHUR.COM/CLIPS)

Pilate and Messala are riding through Jerusalem when they encounter Jesus protecting a leper from stoning by the crowd. Jesus says to the crowd, “Hate, anger, fear, those are lies they use to turn you against each other.” Pilate warns Messala that Jesus offers the people “something more,” that by calming the crowd through compassion, he is more dangerous than all the zealots combined.

**BIBLE THEME: THE REVOLUTIONARY POWER OF LOVE**  
Jesus tells the crowd that if they can set aside the hate and anger that is used to control them they will discover that love is their true nature. Love, as Jesus teaches it, is not simply an innate capacity within us, part of our divine nature, it is an active force that has the power to overcome the evils of the world. Pilate views this as a “poison” more dangerous than all the zealots combined.

### QUESTIONS TO REFLECT UPON

1. Pilate tells Messala that the calming message Jesus offers the crowd is a “poison.” What does he mean by this?
2. How does love threaten power?
3. The love of Jesus in action in this scene is also a kind of courage. Have you had an experience where love gave you a courage you didn’t know you possessed?
4. In protecting the leper, Jesus himself is injured by stone-throwers. What is the effect of his words upon the mob attacking the leper?

### BIBLE VERSES:

You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.

**LEVITICUS 19:18 (ESV)**

Hatred stirs up conflict, but love covers over all wrongs.

**PROVERBS 10:12 (ESV)**

Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.”

**JOHN 14:23 (ESV)**

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**ROMANS 8:37-39 (ESV)**

### TEACHABLE CONCEPTS

- u Only love can overcome hatred; only love can replace anger with kindness.
- u The love that Jesus demonstrates unconditionally to everyone is the Christ nature within ourselves.
- u Love has the power to change the world.

# MERCY TRIUMPHS OVER JUSTICE: JUDAH AND ESTHER AT CAMP



Judah has attempted to kill Messala but escapes. In retaliation, the Romans have crucified 20 Jews to set an example. Esther finds Judah and accuses him that his hatred has caused innocent deaths. “I won’t let him go unpunished for what he’s done to us. I can’t,” he tells her.

## BIBLE THEME: MAN’S JUSTICE VS. GOD’S JUSTICE

Judah’s thirst for revenge is ‘eye-for-an-eye’ justice, but Jesus’ revolutionary teaching transcends this concept of justice with mercy. And mercy triumphs over justice because of love.

## QUESTIONS TO REFLECT UPON

1. Esther tells Judah, “I watched my father be killed. I know what it’s like to want to take your feelings out on others.” Have you ever felt the desire for revenge for someone who wronged you? How did you handle it?
2. Judah’s hatred of one man results in the execution of 20 innocent people. How do negative emotions impact others? Do they have a ripple effect?
3. Esther tells Judah, “There is nothing here for you anymore.” What does she mean by this?

## BIBLE VERSES:

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

**EPHESIANS 4:31-32 (ESV)**

Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord.

**ROMANS 12:19 (ESV)**

Thus says the Lord of hosts, render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another.

**ZECHARIAH 7:9 (ESV)**

You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.

**MATTHEW 5:38-45 (ESV)**

## TEACHABLE CONCEPTS

- u Anger and revenge can be transformed by love & mercy.
- u We have a choice in how we respond to the actions of others.
- u If we turn to love to find true forgiveness for those who wronged us, we can trust that God will bring justice to the situation.



# **FORGIVENESS AND HEALING: JUDAH HELPS JESUS**



**WATCH THE  
COMPANION CLIP**  
SHAREBENHUR.COM/CLIPS

Judah has discovered that even the biggest victories can sometimes feel empty and hollow. He finds Jesus carrying the cross to his death and tries to offer him water. Jesus tells him that he gives his life of his own free will. Later he says from the cross, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do” and Judah experiences, in the gentle rain that begins to fall, the healing of his anger and hatred.

## **BIBLE THEME: LOVE HEALS**

In witnessing the extraordinary love of Jesus as he allows himself to be crucified and forgives his killers, Judah’s heart is opened and he is redeemed, transformed by God’s grace from a man of hate to a man of love.

## **QUESTIONS TO REFLECT UPON**

1. Both Judah and Messala find that winning victories do not lead to satisfaction. Why?
2. When the Centurion hits Judah with his whip for offering Jesus water, he grabs a stone to retaliate and Jesus stops him, saying, “My life, I give it of my own free will.” What is the message Jesus is trying to give to Judah?
3. Judah holds on to the stone until the moment of the cross, when Jesus says, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.” We are all carrying stones—of hurts, anger, and disappointment. What are yours?
4. Have you ever experienced a time when, like Judah, your closed heart was suddenly opened through God’s grace and you were able to forgive?

## **BIBLE VERSES:**

Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

**JOHN 15:13 (ESV)**

Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. He sent out his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destruction. Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man!

**PSALM 107:19-21 (ESV)**

But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

**JOHN 4:14 (ESV)**

And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

**1 PETER 5:10 (ESV)**

## **TEACHABLE CONCEPTS**

- u Forgiveness to those who wronged us can sometimes take a long time, or it can often happen quickly through God’s healing grace.
- u Forgiveness does not excuse the wrong, but heals us from our negative reactions to the wrong.
- u Through Jesus’ sacrifice we are redeemed and can lay our stones down at the cross.
- u God’s mercy, grace and healing are available to all of us.

# BEN-HUR

IN THEATERS AUGUST 19TH, 2016

Ben-Hur is a major Paramount Pictures/MGM motion picture hitting theaters nationwide on August 19, 2016. Bursting with action - including a new chariot race for the ages - and elevated by Christian themes of justice, liberty & radical forgiveness, it tells the classic story of Judah Ben-Hur (Jack Huston), a prince falsely accused of treason by his adopted brother Messala (Toby Kebbell), an officer in the Roman army. Stripped of his title and separated from his family and the woman he loves (Nazanin Boniadi), Judah is forced into slavery & despair.

After years at sea, a breathtaking turn of events sends Judah on an epic journey back to his homeland to seek revenge, where a chance encounter with Jesus of Nazareth (Rodrigo Santoro) transforms his life and leads him to discover grace, mercy and ultimately, redemption. Based on Lew Wallace's timeless novel, *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ*. Also starring Morgan Freeman in an unforgettable performance.

GROUP TICKET INFO:

800-585-1892 | SHAREBENHUR.COM | "BENHUR" TO 313131

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