

Is Ben-Hur in the Bible?

Actually, yes, Ben-Hur is in the Bible, but it's not the Ben-Hur that most people think of when they hear the name. First Kings 4:1-19 gives the names and responsibilities of several chief officials appointed by Solomon during his reign as king over Israel. Ben-Hur was one of the twelve district governors, "who supplied provisions for the king and the royal household. Each one had to provide supplies for one month in the year" (verse 7). Ben-Hur was from the hill country of Ephraim, the first administrative district.

The personal name Ben-Hur means "son of a camel" or "son of Horus." While ben is the Hebrew term for "son of," the word Hur is most likely of Egyptian origin.

The more well-known Ben-Hur is a fictional character created by General Lewis Wallace, who had served in the Union army during the American Civil War. Wallace's 1880 novel titled *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ* was the best-selling novel of the 19th century. The book was turned into a play (1925), a silent movie (1925), and then a famous Hollywood movie starring Charlton Heston in 1959 (the movie was later remade again in 2016).

Wallace's story is about a young Jewish nobleman named Judah Ben-Hur, who overcomes injustice, prejudice, hatred, and racial superiority after an encounter with Jesus Christ, who wholly transforms his life. Through the power and compassion of Christ, Ben-Hur gives up his quest for vengeance and finds all that had been broken in his life is restored. As a work of historical fiction, Ben-Hur does a good job balancing the historical with the fictional. Ben-Hur's interactions with Jesus are infrequent and do not speculate too much on what Jesus might have done in extrabiblical situations. The result is a believable account of life in the first-century world. But the story is

fiction, and its main character, Ben-Hur, is not found in the Bible.

The only actual person named Ben-Hur in the Bible was Solomon's high official in charge of supplying food and provisions needed by the royal court for one month each year. No other details are given about him, and there is no other Ben-Hur in the Bible.