

BEN-HUR

Producers:
Sam Zimbalist

Director:
William Wyler

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FADE IN

1

An ancient map of the Mediterranean area.

THE VOICE

Two thousand years ago, the world was governed by a single city...Rome. And that city was governed by one man, Augustus Caesar.

EXT. JERUSALEM, LONG SHOT - DAY

2

Ringed by great walls, the old city tops the rolling Judean countryside. Ranks upon ranks of stone buildings can be seen, but among the thousands of roofs, two stand out indelibly -- the gleaming golden Temple, and the dour, massive grey Castle of Antonio, symbol of Roman tyranny.

THE VOICE

Judea, for nearly a century, had lain under the mastery of Rome. Its capital city, Jerusalem, was dominated by the Fortress of Antonio, the seat of Roman power, and by the great golden Temple, the outward sign of an inward and imperishable faith.

CLOSE SHOTS OF CASTLE ANTONIO AND THE GOLDEN TEMPLE

3

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A JUDEAN ROAD - DAY

4

THE VOICE

In the seventh year of the reign of Augustus Caesar, the people of Judea were ordered to return to their places of birth to be counted and taxed.

A dozen or so men and women plod along the road, some carrying bundles, some leading heavily-burdened donkeys. A few quiet-faced children tramp along behind their grim elders, who walk without joy. CAMERA HOLDS on this little procession for a moment, then MOVES, LIFTING to reveal an expansive view of the entire countryside. The walking people are travelling a road which leads to a junction. As far as can be seen over the distant hills, long serpentines of people - thousands of human beings, some walking alone, some with entire families and all their possessions piled onto pack animals. They move along slowly, resigned, dogged, melancholy.

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THE VOICE

Yet, though they were a conquered people, still they kept their pride. Always they remembered the promise of their prophets, that one day there would be born among them a Redeemer, their own King, to bring them salvation and perfect freedom.

4
CONT'D
(2)

GROUP SHOT-- WAITING MEN

4A

There are eight or ten men, proud and solemn. Their eyes are the eyes of men whom nothing can humble. Now the CAMERA BEGINS TO MOVE, revealing that the men are part of a large crowd. CAMERA TRAVELS along the queue of people, disclosing that they are waiting to get through one of the city gates, where Roman soldiers stop and question them. The Officer-in-Charge is bored, irritable. He turns to one of his men.

OFFICER

Move these people faster....

SOLDIER

Yes sir. You there! Move along.

OFFICER

This is a census.
(turns insolently to an elderly man)
Know what a census is?

The old man returns his gaze serenely.

During this the soldiers have been questioning men and women who have been slowly passing by. The Officer has held up his own line. Realizing this, unable to rouse the old man, he unrolls a scroll and starts to write.

OFFICER

Well, what's your name, old man?
We haven't all day.

OLD MAN

Abraham.

OFFICER (taking notes)

Born?

OLD MAN

Beersheba.

OFFICER

Destination?

OLD MAN

Beersheba. I am alone.

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OFFICER
Then go...alone! See that you're
counted at Beersheba.

4A
CONT'D
(2)

The man moves on, and another man takes his place, stepping up so that his face is close and full in the CAMERA. He is dark-haired, dark-bearded --thirty or perhaps thirty-five years of age, but with the gravity of one much older, the severe creases of his face suggesting a life of toil and care. He stands patiently before the Roman.

OFFICER
Name?

MAN
Joseph.

OFFICER (wearily)
Of what city?

JOSEPH
Nazareth.

OFFICER
Going to...?

JOSEPH
Bethlehem.

The soldier glances toward a woman who sits on a donkey behind Joseph. She is hooded and her face cannot be seen.

OFFICER
The woman?

JOSEPH
My wife.

OFFICER
Move on. See that you're counted
at Bethlehem.

Joseph moves on, leading the donkey, as THE CAMERA DRAWS
BACK TO:

A FULL SHOT - THE JOPPA GATE

5

It is thronged with people entering and leaving the city. As the figures of Joseph and his wife are swallowed by the crowd, the Voice is heard again.

THE VOICE
But not all obeyed the will of
Caesar...

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While the Voice speaks

5
CONT'D
(2)

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A VAST DESERT - DAY

6

A trackless world of sand. On the horizon a range of boney hills cast long purple shadows before the low afternoon sun. In the distance, moving steadily across the sand, is a camel.

THE VOICE

Far to the south in the Judean desert came a traveller.

A CLOSER VIEW - FROM A LOW ANGLE

7

A majestic, tall, pure-white beast bearing an elaborate scarlet and gold houdah. A man is glimpsed in the houdah. He brings the camel to a stop on top of a dune.

A STILL CLOSER VIEW - THE MAN

8

He is middle aged, with the lined meaningful face of one who has lived vigorously and experienced much. His complexion is dark. He wears the aba and tarboosh - the robe and headdress of the Pharoahs and Ptolemies. With the air of one who has finally arrived at a long-sought goal, he looks around.

THE VOICE

Balthasar, the Egyptian...

A moment, as Balthasar seems to breathe a silent prayer. Then his lips move. He speaks as if to reassure himself.

BALTHASAR

This is the place...at last...

Balthasar brings the camel to a kneeling position in the shelter of a dune. With a sponge and gurglet of water, he gently washes the camel's eyes, face and nostrils.

BALTHASAR (as he works)

You have served me well. You have earned your rest.

He puts down the sponge and gurglet and picks up a bag of beans which he places under the animal's nose.

BALTHASAR

Come... eat....

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He watches for a moment; then he turns and thoughtfully looks out over the desert. Again he speaks as if to reassure himself.

8
CONT'D
(2)

BALTHASAR (murmuring)

They will come...

DISSOLVE TO:

9 OUT

EXT. BALTHASAR'S CAMP - LATE AFTERNOON

10

The white camel still kneels in the shelter of the dune, resting after its meal. Balthasar has pitched a tent of red and white striped fabric, and before it spreads a rug of rich brocade. On the rug he has placed platters of dried mutton and cheese and gurglets of wine, with goblets for three people. His task completed, he straightens up and stares out toward the deepening purple of the horizon. Then, suddenly, his body seems to become tense with inner excitement.

WHAT HE SEES

11

In the distance, moving toward Balthasar, is another tall white camel with a houdah on its back. The VIEW SHIFTS, revealing still another tall white camel, approaching from a different direction. We still see the tracks of Balthasar's camel.

CLOSE SHOT - BALTHASAR

12

He seems a man whose faith has been confirmed.

DISSOLVE TO:

AN ANGLE FROM BEHIND BALTHASAR

13

Before him, a short distance away, are the other travelers. They come to a stop. Their camels kneel. They dismount and stand motionless as statues, caught in an emotion too deep for words, their eyes filled with tears. One of them, Melchior, is tall, gaunt, lean, elderly, and dressed in the robe and turban of a Hindu of high caste. The other, GASPAS, is about fifty, light-haired, handsome. He wears a short tunic and sandals.

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THE VOICE

They came, Melchior the Hindu and Gaspar the Greek, to join Balthasar the Egyptian. Each spoke only his own tongue, yet each understood the other...

13
CONT'D
(2)

Balthasar looks upward in gratitude. The others do likewise. Then they move toward each other, embracing.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BALTHASAR'S CAMP - NIGHT

14

Nearby the three camels are bedded down for the night. Beyond them, in front of the tent, sit the three men, their faces visible in the glow of a little brazier. The voice of Gaspar can be heard.

GASPAR

I was tired of the evil in the world.

CLOSE SHOT - GASPAR

15

GASPAR

I left the city and went up to a mountain on the shores of the Aegean to meditate, to search for an answer to the questions which have tortured mankind. Believing in God, I believed He would answer.

(a pause, then simply)

And he answered and said: 'I shall show you. Your faith is great, Gaspar. Follow the stars, and find Him who is to be born King of the Jews.'

Again he pauses.

GROUP SHOT - THE THREE

16

Gaspar smiles at Balthasar and Melchior, who have listened with mounting excitement.

GASPAR

I did as I was bidden. The star led me here.

BALTHASAR (jubilantly)

It is a miracle, for I too, had the same experience in a different land! One night a voice not of the earth said: 'With two others from the remoteness of the world you will see the Savior and know His reality.'

MELCHIOR (awed)

And in yet a different land God spoke to me!

They look at each other, aware that they are linked in a divinely-ordained brotherhood. Suddenly, spontaneously, they reach out and clasp hands. Suddenly a brilliant light drenches them. They look upward, ecstatic.

ANOTHER ANGLE

17

Soon over their shoulders, high in the velvety desert night, is a great star, seeming to beckon with its pure white light.

BALTHASAR

The star!

GASPAR

The star!

MELCHIOR

The star!

They rise, staring upward, exalted, and triumphant.

DISSOLVE TO:

18-24 OUT

THE NIGHT SKY - SEEN FROM THE VALLEY BELOW - STARS 25

casting a brilliant light which seems to illuminate the whole world. In the foreground, standing motionless near his flock, staring upward in awe, is a shepherd, staff in hand. In the distance are several other shepherds, also motionless, also staring upward - a tableau of awe and wonder.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE NIGHT SKY - SEEN ACROSS THE ROOFTOPS OF BETHLEHEM 26

There are several people on the walls of the town, and several in the streets, all staring upward. On this tableau -

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE DESERT - NIGHT 27

Coming TOWARD THE CAMERA across the sands are the three tall, white camels of the Wise Men. Suddenly Balthasar, in the lead, brings his camel to a stop, pointing upward. Melchior and Gaspar bring their mounts to a halt nearby, and also look upward.

WHAT THEY SEE 28

The magnificent star, seeming to grow in size and brilliance.

CLOSE SHOT - THE WISE MEN 29

Looking upward, exalted. Finally, radiant with joy, they resume their journey toward the beckoning star.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. INN NEAR BETHLEHEM - NIGHT 30

The great star shines directly above the manger in the hill.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE MANGER - NIGHT 31

It is a hushed tableau of worship: the shepherds, seen in dark silhouette, prostrate themselves (check research) before the Mother of the Babe.

CLOSE SHOT - A SHEPHERD 32

A young boy. His eyes shine with simple, unquestioning faith.

CLOSE SHOTS - THE OTHER SHEPHERDS 33

Older men, faces weather-beaten, their eyes eager, beseeching, mirroring mankind's universal craving for peace and a belief which will bring comfort and lead from fear.

THE FACE OF THE MADONNA 34

She is looking at the hope of the world. The cry of the infant is HEARD. She smiles tenderly.

A FULL VIEW OF THE MANGER 35

As the Three Magi enter, bearing their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. They move silently, and kneel in adoration before Him who was born King of the Jews.

EXT. THE INN 36

A shepherd comes out, puts his ram's horn to his lips, blows a blast summoning others.

A VERY LONG SHOT - THE STAR 37

Seen high in the heavens, above the hills of Bethlehem, brighter than ever. The ram's horn can be heard faintly. For a time the star glows brightly, radiantly; then an ominous rumble of thunder is heard, first in the distance, then louder and nearer. A great black mass of clouds, ugly and threatening, moves across the sky, obscuring the star.

DISSOLVE:

THE VOICE

Thirty years passed. The Child in the manger grew to manhood. Still under Rome's hand, the people suffered. And waited. In Rome a new Caesar ruled -- Tiberius. His legions, proud and victorious, ranged the earth.

A MARCHING ROMAN LEGION - DAY 38

They tramp down the main street of Nazareth, a pleasant somnolent little town of white-walled houses. The villagers line the street, clustered near the houses, watching the might of Imperial Rome pass before them --

gilded eagles and banners aloft, shields and helmets and breastplates flashing in the sun, a forest of spears bristling skyward. There are war chariots, cavalry heavy-armed infantry and baggage.

38
CONT'D
(2)

CLOSE SHOT - THE COMMANDER OF THE LEGION

38X1

He sits his horse proudly in front of his troops, a young man wearing a plumed helmet, breastplate and leg guards. This is the Tribune MESSALA. Close behind him, a short distance to the rear, similarly accoutred, is his aide Drusus.

GROUP SHOT - SOME VILLAGERS

39

They stare at the passing soldiers, overwhelmed by the numbers and power of the conquerors. One of the watchers glances away from the Romans. THE CAMERA FOLLOWS him as he walks a short distance to the stall of a carpenter, who bends over a workbench, planing a piece of wood, paying no heed to the soldiers. The curious villager pauses, and for a moment watches the carpenter.

MAN (finally)

Joseph, you don't watch the soldiers.

Joseph doesn't bother to stop work or turn around, but he answers in a pleasant voice.

JOSEPH

We have seen Romans before.

MAN (grimly)

Yes, and we will see them again.

Joseph works on without replying. The SOUND of TRAMPING BOOTS, CLANKING ARMOUR continues. The man glances back at the marching Romans, then again at Joseph. After a moment the man moves a few steps into the carpenter shop, pauses near an unfinished table.

MAN

My table is not finished. Where is your son?

JOSEPH (still working)

He is walking in the hills.

MAN (with a disapproving
look at the table)

He neglects his work, Joseph.

Joseph puts down the plane, straightens up, looks full at the man. Now for the first time, it is seen that the years have greatly aged Joseph, streaked his hair and beard with grey.

39
CONT'D
(2)

JOSEPH

No. Once I reproached him with forgetting his work, and he said to me: "I must be about my Father's business."

Puzzled, the man stares at Joseph.

MAN

But you are his father.

Joseph smiles, and nods, but offers no explanation. He returns to his work. The man watches him for a moment, then moves back toward the passing soldiers.

40 OUT

A LONG SHOT - TOWARD THE ROMANS

41

They continue their steady march through the village, an endless, inexorable, relentless stream.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE JOPPA GATE - JERUSALEM - NIGHT

42

The gate is open and the watchman stands near one of the stone towers, staring out toward the open countryside. The legion is coming through the gate, boots echoing harshly on ancient cobblestones, standards and gilded eagles held aloft.

43-44 OUT

CLOSER SHOT - NEAR GATE

45

The faces of the marching Romans can be seen, expressionless, implacable, the hard faces of men forged by iron discipline.

CLOSE SHOT - MESSALA

45X1

He looks about with interest, calls Drusus' attention to something O.S.

CLOSE SHOT - AT THE DARKENED WINDOW OF HOUSE

46

A man looks out, a bearded Hebrew. His face is expressionless, implacable.

ANGLE TOWARD MARCHING SOLDIERS

47

Ranks upon ranks of steadily marching men. A few people in the street pause to watch, then go on about their business.

48-51 OUT

LONG SHOT - TOWARD MARCHING ROMANS

52

They tramp toward the shadowy outline of the Castle of Antonia on a hill at the far end of the thoroughfare.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE CASTLE OF ANTONIA - LATER

53

It is of huge granite blocks, a castle of many towers and battlements. Before the main entrance is a great stone courtyard. The entire Roman legion is drawn up at attention with mounted officers in front of the ranks. Across from the legion, on the steps of the castle entrance, stand several Roman officers, the commander of the garrison, the Tribune SEXTUS and several other officers. Torches light the scene, and the strident challenging notes of TRUMPETS cut the silence of the night, SOUNDING a military salute.

CLOSE SHOT - MESSALA - THE COMMANDER OF THE NEWLY ARRIVED LEGION

54

While the trumpet salute continues, Messala speaks, hardly moving his lips, his eyes to the front. There is ill-concealed triumph in his voice.

MESSALA

Drusus, when I was a boy, I dreamed of commanding this garrison. And now the wheel has turned. And I am in command.

ANGLE TOWARD SEXTUS AND HIS STAFF - ON THE STEPS OF
THE CASTLE

55

They wait at attention until the trumpeters finish the salute with an elaborate musical flourish. Then they move forward, across the courtyard. THE CAMERA TRAVELS with them until it includes Messala and Drusus, who have dismounted.

SEXTUS

Welcome, Messala. The command is yours.

MESSALA

Thank you.

SEXTUS

Thank you for relieving me.

Sextus salutes Messala who returns the salute, somewhat bemused. Sextus starts toward interior. Others follow.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. VESTIBULE OF CASTLE - CLOSE ANGLE

56

It is a square stone entry with heavy oak doors. The two Tribunes enter, followed by the other officers.

SEXTUS

The commander's guard. Your guard, Tribune.

Messala steps forward across the entry, the CAMERA HOLDING ON him and TRUCKING in front of him. As the CAMERA CONTINUES TO MOVE IN front of Messala it DISCLOSES, as he walks along, the guard drawn up at attention, three ranks deep, in a high vaulted corridor leading into the entry. Messala passes along the line, scrutinizing each of the statue-like figures. Messala halts before one of the guardsmen.

MESSALA

Barca... Third African Legion.

BARCA

Yes, Tribune.

Messala strides along the line. THE CAMERA MOVES WITH HIM as he inspects the entire guard. At the end of their ranks he pauses.

MESSALA

The gods favor you!

VOICE OF GUARDS
Hail, Tribune!

56
CONT'D
(2)

Messala smiles, turns as Sextus opens a door for him.

SEXTUS (to the commanding
officer of the guard)
Captain, dismiss the guard.

INT. COMMANDER'S QUARTERS

57

A Spartan room of stone and oak, with only the barest essentials. Shelves at the back with records, rolls of papyrus and tablets. A few places to sit, a table with jugs of wine and goblets, several windows which command a view of the city. Sextus leads Messala and Drusus into the room, and one of the following officers closes the door.

SEXTUS
And these are your officers... Marius,
Spintho, Mettelus, Coponius... The
Tribune Messala.

All salute. Messala indicates Drusus.

MESSALA
This is my aide, Drusus.

Messala turns to Sextus formally.

MESSALA
In the name of the Divine Tiberius,
Emperor of Rome, greetings.

He gives a rolled papyrus to Sextus, who glances at it perfunctorily.

SEXTUS
In the Emperor's name I surrender
command of this citadel and its men
to the Tribune of Rome.
(he gives Messala a ring of keys)
The keys.
(sighs, becomes informal)
And now...
(to an officer)
Wine, for the Tribune.

Messala removes his helmet, sighs, mops his brow.

MESSALA
I'd forgotten the heat....

SEXTUS
If it were only the heat....

MESSALA

You know I lived right here until I was fourteen. Jerusalem was my home. In fact, my father...

57
CONT'D
(2)

SEXTUS

Your father is well remembered. A fine governor.
(gloomily)

If there can be such a thing in this forsaken land.

Sextus pours wine for Messala and himself.

MESSALA

If you want to rise, Sextus, do the difficult....I asked to be sent here.

SEXTUS (surprise)

Oh? Well, I think you'll find the people have changed since you were a boy.

MESSALA

In what way?

SEXTUS

Won't pay their taxes...irrational resentment of Rome...

MESSALA

Nothing new in all that.

SEXTUS (warming up)

And then there's religion. I tell you they are drunk with religion. They smash the statues of our gods, even those of the Emperor...

MESSALA

Punish them...

SEXTUS

We do when we can find them.

MESSALA (thoughtfully)

First, find the leaders...

SEXTUS

Yes, but how? Oh, you don't know what we're up against. For instance, there's this Messiah business...

MESSALA

I know. There was one predicted when I was a boy.

SEXTUS (nods)

A king of the Jews. Lead them all into some sort of anti-Roman paradise. Makes your head spin. There's a wild man in the desert...he drowns people in water. Then there's a carpenter or something; he does magic tricks...miracles, they call them. Also teaches God is near, in every man. Actually quite profound, some of it...

57
CONT'D
(3)

MESSALA

You have been here too long, Sextus. Go to Capri...bathe in the sea and repeat to yourself over and over again: God is the Emperor, the Emperor is God... very soothing and very practical.

SEXTUS (thoughtfully)

Easy to say. But I wonder sometimes.

MESSALA

And the Emperor wonders why the taxes have fallen off and why there have been so many...incidents. He has ordered the new Governor and me to restore order...

SEXTUS

Good luck.

MESSALA (touches his sword)

And we shall.

SEXTUS

I hope so. But it's not that easy. We can control bodies but
(touches his head)
how do you control what's there?
Especially if it's an idea. A new idea.

There is a moment of silence. Then the door opens and a centurion enters. He crosses to Messala, salutes him.

CENTURION

There's a Jew outside. He wants to see the Tribune.

MESSALA

I assume he has a name.

CENTURION

Oh, yes, sir. Calls himself a prince. Prince Judah Ben Hur.

MESSALA (evenly)
Then you call him a prince too.
Tell him I'll join him.

57
CONT'D
(4)

CENTURION
Yes, Tribune.

He starts to go.

MESSALA
Oh...and, centurion, this was his
country before it was ours. We
must try to remember that.

CENTURION
Yes, Tribune.

He goes.

SEXTUS (nods)
Very wise. This Ben Hur is the
richest man in Jerusalem.

MESSALA
I know. We were friends as boys.

SEXTUS (startled)
You and...and a Jew?

MESSALA
Yes. We were like brothers. His
house was my second home.

SEXTUS
A great house.

MESSALA
A great family. My father and his
father were friends.

Messala crosses to the door. He pauses.

MESSALA
Sextus, you asked how you deal with
an idea. I'll tell you how: with
another idea....With Rome.

He goes out. Sextus and the officers move toward
another door.

CORRIDOR

58

At the far end of it, near the entry, is the figure of a man. He wears a tunic, with a robe of rich material. Only his back is seen, for he is examining some implements of war in one of the racks which line the corridor. He is not aware of Messala, who comes out of the commander's quarters and pauses.

MESSALA

Judah!

BEN HUR (turns)

Messala!

They come together, embrace.

MESSALA

I said I'd come back.

BEN HUR

And I never thought you would...
I'm glad. I am so glad....

They stare at one another a long moment.

MESSALA

Look at you!

BEN HUR

And you!

He links his arm in his friend's, leads him along the corridor.

MESSALA

But you're taller. I don't like that.

BEN HUR

Of course, Tribune, you could take my head off.

They both laugh.

MESSALA

Strange, when we were boys I was taller. Remember?

BEN HUR

Yes, I remember. Everything.

MESSALA

I do too. And your sister...your mother...how are they?

BEN HUR

They've talked of nothing but you for days, since we learned you were coming.

MESSALA
Is Tirzah married yet?

58
CONT'D
(2)

BEN HUR
No, not yet. The suitors come...the
suitors go...but she dreams and dreams.
(smiles)
Of course you know she's been in love
with you since she was five....

MESSALA
I can't wait to see them. And I've a
gift for Tirzah. Something I've
brought all the way from...
(he sees the spears)

Smiling, Ben Hur steps over to an arms rack, takes up
a spear. He tosses it to Messala.

MESSALA
Where the beams cross.

The Roman lofts the spear easily and hurls it.

WIDE ANGLE

59

The spear sails the length of the corridor and stabs
into an oak beam, sticking there -- quivering.

TWO SHOT - MESSALA AND BEN HUR

60

Messala grins at Ben Hur, who takes another spear.
He lofts it, hurls it.

CLOSE SHOT - AT FAR END OF CORRIDOR

61

Ben Hur's spear pierces the beam so close to the other
spear that the two weapons seem like one.

BEN HUR
Down Eros! Up Mars! Remember?

MESSALA (nods)
Down Eros! Up Mars!..
(indicates target)
After all these years, still close.

BEN HUR
Yes...in every way.

MESSALA (frowns)
I hope so.

61
CONT'D
(2)

BEN HUR (nods)
I know. You are a Tribune of Rome and
I am a Jew...whose life you saved once...

MESSALA
The best thing I ever did....Judah,
this is a difficult province to govern.
I'm going to need help...your help.
Your advice.

BEN HUR
You really want my advice?

MESSALA
I do...yes!

BEN HUR (smiles)
Withdraw the legions. Give us our
freedom.

Messala looks at him a moment, undecided as to how to
take this: he decides upon lightness. He laughs.

MESSALA
Unfortunately, the Emperor is devoted
to his empire. And he's particularly
fond of Judaea.

BEN HUR
Judaea is not fond of the Emperor.

MESSALA (lightly)
Is there anything so sad as unreci-
procated love?

Laughing, he ushers Ben Hur into the commander's quarters.

INT. COMMANDER'S QUARTERS

62

MESSALA
My quarters...

BEN HUR (looks about)
A bit grim.

MESSALA
Not grim. Austere. Virtuous. Roman...
Judah, I'm going to be second in command
to the new governor, Valerius Gratus....
He's arriving in a few days...with two
more legions.

Ben Hur's face darkens. He looks at Messala with quick concern.

BEN HUR

Then the rumors are true?

Messala looks at Ben Hur a moment. Then he comes straight to the point.

MESSALA

The Emperor does not approve of your countrymen. There is rebellion in the wind. It will be crushed.

(he suddenly smiles again)

But --

(he presses Ben Hur's arm reassuringly) no matter what happens, you and your family are safe. You have money, position, culture. Why, you...you are like a Roman. You have nothing in common with the rabble that makes trouble here....

BEN HUR

The rabble, as you call them, are my people. I am one of them.

They stand looking at each other for a moment.

MESSALA

Be wise, Judah. It is a Roman world. If you want to survive, you must become part of it.

BEN HUR (slowly)

You have changed, Messala.

MESSALA

I have grown up. I have seen the world since I left Jerusalem. I've seen Rome. And I tell you, Judah, it's no accident one small village on the Tiber was chosen to rule the world...

BEN HUR

Your legions...

MESSALA

Other countries had armies. Fine armies. I know. I've fought them. No, it was fate that chose us to civilize the world. And we have. Our roads and our ships connect every corner of the earth. Roman law, architecture, literature, are the glory of the human race...

BEN HUR

I believe in my people....

MESSALA
Of course you do. And you can
help them.

62
CONT'D
(3)

BEN HUR
How?

MESSALA
You are a prince. A man of power.
Respected. Admired. And the people
here would listen if you were to
speak out against rebellion. Judah,
persuade them that resistance to Rome
is stupid...worse than stupid:
futile. For it can end in only one
way: the extinction of your people....

BEN HUR (slowly)
I am against violence, Messala. My
people know this but...

MESSALA (quickly)
Then we're agreed. I know you'll help
me. Now when can I come see your family?

BEN HUR
We had hoped tomorrow.

MESSALA
Good. But now for our toast.
Dreadful wine by the way.

BEN HUR (smiles)
Especially fermented for the Roman army.

MESSALA
You're very cruel to your conquerors.
(then seriously)
In an insane world, there is one
sanity -- the loyalty of old friends.
We must believe in one another. Be-
cause that's all there is. Will you
drink to that?

BEN HUR
With all my heart.

They drink. But under the surface warmth, Ben Hur is
anxious, Messala is watchful.

DISSOLVE:

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P.23A
63 OUT
63X1

BEN HUR COURTYARD

MED. SHOT - MESSALA, BEN HUR, MIRIAM AND TIRZAH

Messala has just come into the courtyard; greetings are over. They stand by the fountain while Messala looks round at the house.

MESSALA (warmly)

Here it is, the place I've remembered, the court where we played at changing guard, the roof where we used to stand and throw pebbles on people in the street, and hide -- all just the same.

TIRZAH

Except for the fountain. Instead of the old well which used to go dry so often.

MESSALA

Promptly, every summer. - A new fountain, and a new Tirzah. You've grown up.

TIRZAH (delighted)

I should think so, in all these years.

MESSALA

I remember when I felt old enough to be your father.

TIRZAH

But you haven't altered in any way at all.

Ben Hur and Miriam laugh, but there is a faint twinge of injured pride in Messala: he unconsciously fingers (the sword at his side ?) -- his uniform.

MESSALA

No?

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BEN HUR (smiles)
Still playing at changing guard,
Messala!

63X1
CONT'D
(2)

MIRIAM (who has noticed the fleet-
ing changed expression on Messala's
face)
A successful soldier, Tirzah: he's a man of
great responsibility: we must remember that.

Messala relaxes again.

TIRZAH (smiling)
And so he always was. To me.

BEN HUR
Come. There's so much excitement in the
kitchen.... They're making the meal a
banquet. You might be the Emperor himself.

They go into the sitting room.

INT. SITTING ROOM

64X1

As they enter, Amrah appears with wine.

BEN HUR
And here's old Amrah.

The old woman looks Messala in the eyes as though searching
them.

AMRAH
You're welcome, Roman master.

MESSALA
Listen to her! Master indeed!
(takes her hand in his)
I can remember the time when Judah and I
felt this gentle hand strike like a gladiator.

AMRAH
The Roman master must forgive his servant.

MESSALA (laughs)
I forgive but I cannot forget.

AMRAH
It is better to forget.

Her eyes move from his face towards Miriam as she moves away.
There is a moment of uncertainty at Amrah's grave coldness.

BEN HUR (breaking in)
Tell Tirzah about Rome, Messala.

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TIRZAH

Is it such a wonderful city as they say?

64X1
CONT'D
(2)

MESSALA

More wonderful, more fabulous....
The Emperor builds and builds,
turning brick to marble.

Messala feels in his tunic and removes an object wrapped in cloth which he gives to Tirzah.

MESSALA

I almost forgot. I brought you this.

She unwraps a splendid barbaric brooch.

TIRZAH

I've never seen anything like this before. It's beautiful, Messala. Thank you. Is it Roman?

MESSALA

No, Libyan. I was there last year.

TIRZAH

Did you get this then?

MESSALA (nods and looks across at Ben Hur)

A tremendous campaign. We met their armies on the coast. Then we marched on their capital. Barbaric city, but fascinating. At least it was, until we destroyed it.

(Messala is aware he is beginning to chill his audience.)

We gave them every chance to surrender, but they were such obstinate devils. They wanted obliteration, so we gave it to them. And there the city is now, a pile of rubble still stinking of the fire... But I'm boring you.

There is a moment's silence. Then Ben Hur changes the subject.

BEN HUR

Come with me, Messala. There's something I want to show you.

Both men rise. Messala smiles at Tirzah.

MESSALA

I chose the right present for you. It's a brooch for a woman.

Ben Hur and Messala leave. Tirzah stands beside her mother, looking wistfully after Messala.

64X1
CONT'D
(3)

Miriam takes the brooch from Tirzah's hand, looks at it thoughtfully.

MIRAM

I wonder what happened to her...

TIRZAH

To her?

MIRIAM

The girl they took this from... in that burning city.

Tirzah looks at her mother: she is suddenly grave; she understands.

65X1 OUT

EXT. BEN HUR HOUSE

66X1

Ben Hur and Messala make their way through a confusion of camels, horses, bales of merchandise, shouting servants and grooms.

MESSALA (impressed)

Those caravans... all yours?

BEN HUR

Yes. God has been good to me.

MESSALA

God? Which God?

BEN HUR (smiles)

Now you know we have only one God.

MESSALA

One? There are hundreds. And you with your wealth could afford as many as you like. Or even the greatest luxury of all: none. Like me.

TWO SHOT - BEN HUR AND MESSALA

67X1

They have approached a stable. There are several horses, among them a fine black Arab stallion. Ben Hur gestures to the attendant who brings the horse to them.

BEN HUR

How do you like him?

MESSALA

Magnificent...

Messala examines the horse professionally.

MESSALA

Arabic --

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BEN HUR (nods)
I think he's got the look of the breed...

67X1
CONT'D
(2)

MESSALA
Yes! He has the eye.

BEN HUR
And the heart. I've raced him.

MESSALA
Let me try him...

BEN HUR
Whenever you like. He's yours.

MESSALA (overcome)
You... you'll give me this? Oh, Judah...
(he faces Ben Hur)
Judah, you are good, and it's going to
be like old times. I know it!

Messala embraces Ben Hur. A warm moment; then:

MESSALA
Tell me... Did you... did you think about
what I said yesterday?

BEN HUR
Yes...

MESSALA
And?

BEN HUR
I have talked to a number of people al-
ready. And I have spoken against violence,
against... incidents. Most of the men I
talked to agree with me.

MESSALA (frowning)
Most... but not all?

BEN HUR
No, not all.

MESSALA (carefully)
Who does not agree?

Ben Hur pauses uncomfortably; he is evasive.

BEN HUR
The resentful, the impatient...

MESSALA (quickly)
Who are they?
(pause)
Yes, Judah, who are they?

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BEN HUR (startled at
his bluntness)
Would I retain your friendship if I
became an informer?

67X1
CONT'D
(3)

MESSALA
To tell me the names of criminals is
hardly informing.

BEN HUR (evenly)
They are not criminals, Messala. They
are patriots. Like you.

MESSALA
Patriots!
(he stops himself; he speaks
urgently now, personally)
Judah, let me explain something to you.
Something you may not know. The
Emperor is watching us. At this moment
he watches the East. This is my great
opportunity... and yours too. If I
bring order into Judaea I can have any
post I want... and you'll rise with me.
I promise. And do you know where it
can end? Rome. Yes! Perhaps at the
side of Caesar himself. I mean it...
it can happen, and this is the moment,
Judah. I swear: this is the time. The
Emperor is watching us, judging us. All
I must do is serve him. And all you need
do is help me -- serve Him.

BEN HUR (slowly)
You speak as if he were god.

MESSALA
He is god. The only god. He is power.
Real power on earth. Not...
(gestures at the sky)
not that!
(Then softly)
Help me, Judah.

BEN HUR (gently)
I would do anything for you, Messala
except betray my own people.

MESSALA (explodes)
In the name of all the gods, what do
the lives of a few Jews mean to you?

BEN HUR (sharply)
If I cannot persuade them, that does
not mean that I will help you murder
them. Besides -- you must know this,
Messala -- I believe in the past of my
people and in their future.

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MESSALA

Future! You are a conquered people...

67X1
CONT'D
(4)

Their eyes meet in open hostility.

BEN HUR (intensely)

You may conquer the land. You may slaughter the people. But that is not the end. We will rise again.

MESSALA (rapidly, his voice rising)

You live on dead dreams. You live on myths of the past. The glory of Solomon is gone! Do you think it will return? Moses is dead! Joshua will not rise again to save you -- nor David.

(a moment, then significantly)

There is only one reality in the world today. Look to the West, Judah. Look to Rome.

Ben Hur stares at Messala a moment, understanding at last the division between them.

BEN HUR (slowly)

I thought it was my friend who had returned. But I was wrong. It is a conqueror who has returned.... An enemy.

MESSALA

Judah, you're a fool!

67X1
CONT'I
(5)

Ben Hur lashes back in anger.

BEN HUR

I would rather be a fool than a
traitor. Or a killer.

MESSALA (stung)

I am a soldier who...

BEN HUR (fiercely)

Who kills for Rome. And Rome is
evil.

MESSALA (taken aback)

Judah, I warn you...

BEN HUR

No, I warn you. Rome is an affront
to God. Rome is strangling my people,
my country, the whole earth, but not
forever, and I tell you this: the day
Rome falls there will be a shout of
freedom such as the world has never
heard before!There is a silence. Ben Hur looks at him in anguish:
there is nothing more he can say; he is resolved.
Messala sees this.

MESSALA (carefully, coldly)

Judah, either you help me or you oppose
me. You have no other choice. Either
you are for me or you are against me.

BEN HUR (with pain)

If that is the choice, Messala... then
I am against you.

They stand for a moment staring at each other.

MESSALA (slowly, with hate,
humiliation)

Remember, I begged you....

Messala turns abruptly and goes. Ben Hur starts to
restrain him, but he is gone.

CLOSE SHOT - BEN HUR

68X1

BEN HUR

Messala...

But Messala does not look back. The horse on its rein whinnies. Ben Hur looks at it, recalling this was a gift. He starts to call again, but he does not. Instead, sadly, he strokes the horse's neck. Then he starts back to the house.

68X1
CONT'D
(2)

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. COURTYARD

69X1

Ben Hur enters slowly, stops at door, touches the Mesusah, kisses his fingers. He opens the door.

INT. HOUSE COURT

70X1

Frowning, Ben Hur enters. Tirzah meets him.

TIRZAH

Dinner's ready.... Where is Messala?

BEN HUR

He's gone.

TIRZAH (startled)

Gone? But why?

Miriam appears in the doorway of the sitting room.

TIRZAH

Mother, Messala's gone. Without saying goodby or...

BEN HUR

He couldn't stay.

MIRIAM (covering up)

I'm sorry. But then he must have many duties. He's just arrived...

BEN HUR

No. We quarrelled.

TIRZAH

Oh, Judah, how could you? He is your best friend.

MIRIAM (warningly)

Don't, Tirzah...

BEN HUR

No, it's all right. He wanted to use me, Tirzah. He wanted to use my friendship to betray our people.

TIRZAH

I can't believe that! He wouldn't...

Ben Hur does not answer.

MIRIAM

They are Romans first. We must never forget that.

TIRZAH

But... but a friendship like yours, Judah... why, nothing can change that! You always said nothing can change...

She stops, close to tears.

BEN HUR (gently)

I'm sorry, too, Tirzah. Where I once had a friend, I now have an enemy.

Tirzah holds up the brooch.

TIRZAH

An enemy? But he called this house home. He gave me this....

She bursts suddenly into tears and before Miriam can comfort her, she has fled from the room.

MIRIAM

Poor child. She wanted to love him....

BEN HUR

So did I... But they are the masters and we are the slaves. That is the nature of things.

MIRIAM (gently)

Today... but we were a great nation, blessed by God, when they were a barbarian village...

BEN HUR (drily)

A comforting thought...

MIRIAM

Well, come along to dinner. No sad faces. We'll remember him the way he was. And we'll forget the Tribune. We'll forget we ever saw him again.

They go into the sitting room.

DISSOLVE TO:

71-73 OUT
74

EXT. THE TEMPLE

The first rays of the morning sun turn the towers and walls to gold. Priests on top the walls lift their trumpets and SOUND the call to morning prayer.

INT. TEMPLE - AN INNER COURT

75

A great chamber of white marble, ringed by colonnades supporting many porticos. The area is filled with people repeating the "shema" after a priest. They chant the prayer. Ben Hur enters and joins the worshippers.

CLOSE SHOT - BEN HUR

76

He stands near one of the porticos, listening thoughtfully. The prayer continues. He bows his head, joins in the prayers.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE HOUSE OF HUR - ANGLE TOWARD OUTER GATE

77

A man is opening the gate for Ben Hur, who looks off in surprise and pleasure. He greets one of the camel tenders and strides across the courtyard, CAMERA MOVING with him.

The courtyard, usually a quiet, sun-mellowed sanctuary of manicured gardens and delicate blooms has taken on the atmosphere of a bustling oriental bazaar. It is filled with great earth-colored camels, all kneeling, their packs still on their backs. Some of the camel-tenders are watering their charges; others are removing the burdens from the camels' backs. Ben Hur moves toward house.

78 OUT

HOUSE OF HUR - ENTRY

79

Ben Hur enters, touches the Mesusah, kisses his fingers. Amrah comes forward to meet him.

AMRAH

Master Judah... the caravan from Antioch...

BEN HUR (cutting in)

Yes, yes, Amrah... I saw....

He hurries across the hall to the main living room.

INT. MAIN ROOM

80

Miriam, wearing a flowing gown of pure white, sits on a divan near a man of about sixty, thin, dignified, a man of intelligence and quiet poise. He wears an embroidered robe over an inner tunic. His face lights up as Ben Hur enters.

BEN HUR

Simonides! Simonides, welcome!

SIMONIDES (rising)

Judah, master! Greetings!

Ben Hur crosses the room and takes both of the older man's hands.

MIRIAM

As usual, Simonides has brought gifts.

(holds up a necklace)

Look, amber and jade for me. And silk for Tirzah....

SIMONIDES

And for the master, Spanish wine...

BEN HUR (smiles)

Not to mention the best gift of all: your presence, Simonides.

SIMONIDES

You do your servant honor. I also bring good news from Antioch.

BEN HUR

The caravans from Illyria?

SIMONIDES

Have all arrived... not a camel lost.

(gives him a scroll)

Here is the accounting.

BEN HUR

Oh good... good...! And what of Numidia?

SIMONIDES

The trade route is ours. Guaranteed by treaty with the king.

Ben Hur grins.

BEN HUR

Once a year you bring your accounting and once a year I find myself wealthier. But my greatest treasure is my steward.

Simonides bows.

80
CONT'D
(2)

SIMONIDES

My life belongs to the House of Hur.

Ben Hur pats the older man's arm affectionately.

BEN HUR

I need your counsel, old friend.

(turning away, thoughtfully)

These are difficult times and I...

(turning back)

I think we do wrong to rely only on the westward trade routes. What would you think of a caravan to Parthia?

Simonides stares at him.

SIMONIDES (startled)

Parthia is the enemy of Rome!

BEN HUR (firmly)

Yes. But one day Rome's enemies may be our friends.

Miriam glances at her son searchingly. Simonides goes up to him.

SIMONIDES

Your mother has told me of your quarrel with Messala. But do not be eager to challenge Rome. We must be cautious...

BEN HUR (after a pause)

We'll speak further tonight. You're weary from your journey.

SIMONIDES

Yes. One other matter. You recall I have a daughter...

BEN HUR

She must be a young woman by now.

SIMONIDES

Yes. And your property, since she is the daughter of your slave.

BEN HUR (warmly)

When I inherited you, Simonides, I did not inherit a slave but a trusted friend.

Simonides bows.

SIMONIDES

But according to Temple law, Esther requires your permission to marry. She has come with me from Antioch to ask permission.

80
CONT'D
(3)

BEN HUR (readily)

It is granted.

SIMONIDES (smiling)

Thank you.

MIRIAM

Esther is with Tirzah. She will bring her.

BEN HUR

I wish you the joy of many grandchildren.

SIMONIDES

If it is the Lord's will, I shall rejoice.

Ben Hur sits down in a tall chair. He looks off to the right.

WHAT HE SEES

81

Across the room, standing in the doorway with Tirzah, is the daughter of Simonides. She is young, about Tirzah's age.

CLOSE SHOT - BEN HUR

82

He was unprepared for such haunting loveliness. For a moment he doesn't speak. Then he glances at Simonides.

BEN HUR

Your daughter is lovely.

WIDER ANGLE

83

Simonides bows to Ben Hur.

SIMONIDES

With your permission...

He goes to Esther, takes her hand, leads her forward. They stop about ten feet from Ben Hur.

SIMONIDES

Esther wishes to speak to her master.

Simonides moves back, leaving Esther alone before Ben Hur.

CLOSER SHOT - BEN HUR AND ESTHER

He glances at her steadily. For a moment she meets his glance; then she lowers her eyes.

BEN HUR

You are eager to marry, Esther?

ESTHER

It is my father's wish.

BEN HUR

Of what house is this fortunate man?

ESTHER

His own, master.

SIMONIDES (from background)

He is a freeman.

There is a proud note in Simonides' voice. Ben Hur smiles across the room at the old man. Then he turns back to the girl, studying her again.

BEN HUR

Tell me about him.

She hesitates for an instant, as if searching for the right words.

ESTHER

I have seen him only once.

She can find nothing else to say.

SIMONIDES

He is a merchant, well thought of in Antioch. He will pay for Esther's freedom.

Ben Hur has continued to watch Esther while her father speaks.

BEN HUR (to Esther)

You have your freedom as my wedding gift.

ESTHER

You are generous, master.

There is a pause.

BEN HUR

Do you love this man, Esther?

She stares at him, surprised by the question.

ANGLE TOWARDS SIMONIDES, MIRIAM AND TIRZAH

85

They, too, find the question surprising.

TWO SHOT - ESTHER AND BEN HUR

86

He regards her intently as he awaits her answer.
At last it comes.

ESTHER (quietly)
I will learn to love him.

BEN HUR
You have my permission to marry.

He rises.

WIDER ANGLE

87

Amrah enters carrying a tray with wine on it. Ben Hur takes a goblet and gives it to Esther. Simonides comes forward with Miriam and Tirzah. All take wine. Ben Hur raises his goblet to Esther.

BEN HUR (smiling)
To your happiness... to your love.

All drink. Ben Hur watches Esther, who meets his gaze.

CLOSE SHOT - MIRIAM

87X1

She looks from Ben Hur to Esther. She is aware of their attraction for each other.

DISSOLVE:

FULL SHOT - JERUSALEM

88

Looking out over the silent shadowy rooftops of the city. Off-stage a voice is HEARD singing a haunting Arab melody. CAMERA PULLS BACK REVEALING Esther. She stands on the roof of the house, gazing out over the city. Her hands rest on the parapet. Several of the tiles are loose. Idly, she moves them back into place. Then a little whimper is HEARD. Esther looks down.

ANOTHER ANGLE

At her feet is Ben Hur's dog. She smiles at the animal, reaches down, fondles it. Then she becomes conscious of another's presence, straightens up, looks around. She seems embarrassed.

ESTHER (turns)

Oh...

BEN HUR (smiles at her)

I disturbed you?

ESTHER

No...

BEN HUR

What were you thinking?

ESTHER

I was saying goodbye to this city...
and this house.

BEN HUR

You've not often been here. What do
you remember of it?

ESTHER

My father sometimes brought me here
when I was little. It was always a
house where I was happy. Except once
when you had been out hunting, and they
carried you home on a hurdle, injured.
I touched your face as you lay there,
and prayed to God: "Don't let this boy
die!"

BEN HUR

I can hear how you said it: gently,
as you say it now.

ESTHER

Yes, master.

BEN HUR

Master? I have given you your freedom.

Esther is grave, already in love with Ben Hur. Hardly
confessing it to herself she tries to express her feel-
ings.

ESTHER

It's strange. I hardly felt a slave.
And now I hardly feel free. As though
I must always belong here, as I have,
all my life long.

BEN HUR
To this house?

89
CONT'I
(2)

ESTHER (steadily, quietly)
Your house.

BEN HUR
In the old wise days of Solomon, if
there happened to be among his slaves
some particular wonder, a girl who filled
his eyes when he looked at her, he could
choose her out from the rest and take her
to him.
(he smiles)
Wise days.

ESTHER (she looks away from him,
but her eyes are shining)
Different days. And long ago.

BEN HUR
If you were not a bride, I should ask
to kiss you goodbye.

ESTHER (sadly, but smiling a little)
If I were not a bride, there would be no
goodbyes to be said.

A pause. He is on the verge of kissing her. He does
not. He notices the slave-ring on her thumb.

BEN HUR
The slave-ring.
He puts the ring on his little finger.

BEN HUR
Fair exchange: freedom to you,
(smiles)
slavery to me.

ESTHER
You can't wear a slave ring.

BEN HUR
Why not? As a link of a chain which
still holds you to this house.

ESTHER
Until you meet the woman you will marry?

BEN HUR
Yes, until then.

Pause. They look at each other a moment, then Ben
Hur kisses her. As they stand apart.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Simonides appears. He sees from the expression on Esther's face that she is disturbed.

BEN HUR (shows ring)
Your daughter wears the slave ring
no longer.

SIMONIDES
Thank you, Judah. Esther sees the world
with the eyes of the young, but she is
marrying a good man and she will learn
to love him.

ESTHER (a whisper)
Goodnight, master.

BEN HUR
You have no master now, remember.

ESTHER (pauses, smiles)
Goodnight, Judah,
(she kisses her father)
Goodnight, father.
(she goes)

Simonides looks after her fondly, then turns back to Ben Hur. His face becomes grave.

SIMONIDES
Judah, I'm greatly concerned for you
and your family. Messala is no longer
your friend. The new governor is a
tyrant and a butcher. Come with us to
Antioch.

BEN HUR
I value your counsel, Simonides.

SIMONIDES
Then follow it.

BEN HUR (after a pause)
I don't know what the future will bring.
But this is the house of my fathers.
This is where I belong.

There is silence.

SIMONIDES (presently)
Then God be with you, Judah.

BEN HUR
Goodnight, old friend.

Simonides goes. Ben Hur stands there, looking over the city. Then he looks at the ring.

DISSOLVE TO Joppa Gate

INT. INNER COURTYARD BEN HUR HOUSE - DAY

90X1

MIRIAM

Fare safely and well, Simonides.
The crowd is filling the streets
to see the new Governor. You must
go while the way is free.

SIMONIDES

I wish we left you at a better time.
This man Valerius Gratus governs like
a tyrant and a butcher, or so it is
said, and comes with that purpose.

MIRIAM

Have no fears for us.
(she kisses Esther)
Journey happily, God with you.

ESTHER

God with you here.

They leave.

THE JOPPA GATE - DAY - CITY IN BACKGROUND

91

Flanking both sides of the gate, standing stiffly at attention, are cohorts of the Jerusalem garrison, their burnished breastplates and weapons gleaming in the midday sun. Coming through the gate is the newly-arrived governor, Valerius Gratus, mounted and in full armour. Behind Gratus, filling the Joppa road, are the legions which have arrived with the governor. Roman trumpets are sounding a salute. On a high, challenging note the salute ends.

CLOSE SHOT - GRATUS AND THE MOUNTED OFFICERS

92

Gratus is about fifty, lean, tanned, sharp-eyed. His magnificent white horse has a purple saddlecloth. Gratus comes to a halt facing Messala, who is also wearing full armour and a plumed helmet. A short distance behind the Tribune are Drusus and the other officers of the garrison, similarly accoutred.

MESSALA

I bring the procurator his wreath of office. May the gods favor you, Valerius Gratus.

Gratus removes his helmet, hands it to an aide. A foot soldier approaches, bearing the wreath of office on a pillow. Gratus takes it, places it on his head.

GRATUS

Thank you, Tribune. But where is the delegation from the city?

MESSALA

There won't be one, sir. We don't expect an enthusiastic welcome. But we've taken every precaution for your protection, in case of trouble.

GRATUS (with a twitch of a smile)

Very well. Let us make the venture.

Messala raises his arm. Again the trumpets sound. Messala and the officers wheel their horses round and lead the way.

DISSOLVE TO:

STREET WITHIN THE CITY - FULL SHOT

93

The Roman vanguard approaches at a brisk march, first the musicians, then the standard bearers, holding aloft battle flags and the gilded effigy of the Roman eagle, high on a staff, wings outspread. Behind them come heavy armed infantry. Flutes and trumpets begin their piercing martial music.

A VERY CLOSE SHOT - AN OLD MAN

94

A white bearded ancient. Tears roll down his cheeks. The tramp of Roman boots can be heard.

ANOTHER ANGLE TOWARD TROOPS

95

The street is now a moving forest of spears. In the distance, cavalry and artillery appear.

GROUP SHOT - WATCHING MEN

96

Standing in the shadow of a building. They watch without comment, without emotion, their faces impassive.

FULL SHOT - THE STREET

97

It is choked from one end to the other with the steadily marching men from Rome.

CLOSE SHOT - A MAN

98

He looks at the Romans with loathing. Behind him, huddled in the opening of an alley, several women.

CLOSE SHOT - ANOTHER WATCHING MAN

99

He shows his contempt by spitting.

ANGLE ON A ROOF TOP

100

A group of people look down on the passing Romans with quiet hatred. In the background, on adjoining roofs, many people can be seen watching.

EXT. THE STREET LEADING TO THE HOUSE OF HUR 101

The Roman vanguard, spearheaded by the great gilded eagle, swings down the street, followed by the legions.

CLOSE SHOT - BEN HUR AND TIRZAH - ON THE ROOF 102

They stand near the parapet, looking down. The brassy blare of the trumpets and flutes echoes from the street below. They watch in silence.

TIRZAH (after a moment)

There must be thousands of soldiers!
It must have been difficult for Esther
and Simonides to get through the streets.

BEN HUR

They left in good time -- by the Damascus gate.

Tirzah glances at her brother worriedly. Suddenly she leans forward on the parapet, points.

TIRZAH

Look!

WHAT THEY SEE 103

The street is a solid mass of marching soldiers. An officer rides at the head of a detachment of mounted men, looks upward for an instant. It is Messala.
There is no recognition on his face.

TWO SHOT - TIRZAH AND BEN HUR 104

Ben Hur's jaw tightens as he looks down.

ANGLE IN STREET 105

Messala rides past, directly below Ben Hur and Tirzah, without looking upward again.

TWO SHOT - TIRZAH AND BEN HUR 106

as they watch Messala.

TIRZAH (slowly)

I never really hated Rome before.

He smiles at her faintly. Then his glance returns to the approaching legions.

106
CONT'D
(2)

BEN HUR

The new governor...

The girl turns, following her brother's glance.

ANGLE IN STREET

107

Valerius Gratus rides alone, between two detachments of cavalrymen. A stir of excitement goes through the crowd as the governor approaches. Gratus is almost below Tirzah and Ben Hur now.

108-109
OUT

TWO SHOT - TIRZAH AND BEN HUR

110

Their glances follow the governor. Then Tirzah turns away.

TIRZAH

Let's go in.

BEN HUR

In a moment...

Indifferently now, Tirzah turns back. The tiles on top of the parapet are mortared in the shape of an inverted "V" and as Tirzah rests her hands on the outer, sloping side of the "V", several of the tiles, loose in the mortar, give way. Tirzah gasps.

TIRZAH (frantically)

Judah!

Swiftly he glances at her, leans out, looking down to see what has happened.

ANGLE IN STREET

111

One of the tiles has struck Gratus, opening a gash on his forehead. He slumps over in the saddle, then falls to the street as his horse, frightened, rears up.

TWO SHOT - TIRZAH AND BEN HUR

112

Horrified, they stare downward.

TIRZAH (gasping)
Judah! Judah, he...

112
CONT'D
(2)

A shouted command is heard. Tirzah and Ben Hur seem stunned, unable for an instant to comprehend the tragedy which is encircling them.

WHAT THEY SEE

113

Directly below them Gratus is sprawled on the street, close to the pawing hooves of his horse. The bleeding wound on Gratus' head can be clearly seen. A Centurion, dismounting, runs to Gratus' side, kneels beside him. Cavalrymen, in response to quick commands, dismount, rush to the fallen governor, kneel around him. The Centurion looks straight upward.

CENTURION
Up there! That man!

TWO SHOT - TIRZAH AND BEN HUR

114

Still they stare downward. The shouts of the crowd, the commands of officers, the noise of troops, all these sounds rise in a medley of horror around them.

TIRZAH (as if hypnotized)
Judah...Judah...I didn't....

BEN HUR
Tirzah, how...?

TIRZAH (in a rush of words)
The stone was loose...I leaned on it.
The stone was loose...the stone...
(turning, wrenching her glance
from below)
slipped when I touched it.
(staring at her brother, her eyes
big with fear)

Quickly Ben Hur steps to her, takes her protectively in his arms.

BEN HUR
Tirzah, it's all right. You couldn't help it...

A sob wracks her body.

TIRZAH (wildly, brokenly)
Judah, what have I done? What will they do?

She sobs.

BEN HUR (holding her close)
Tirzah, listen to me!

TIRZAH (hysterically)
I've killed him, I've killed a man!

BEN HUR (cutting in swiftly)
Tirzah, don't say that. It was an
accident.

He shakes her, grips her tightly.

MIRIAM'S VOICE (o.s.)
Judah! Tirzah!

BEN HUR
Come. Be calm. Say nothing.

He quickly leads her to the stairs and they start down.

INT. STAIRS

115X1

Halfway down they meet Miriam, who has been alarmed by the sounds and shouts. Ben Hur's dog is at her side, whimpering uneasily.

MIRIAM
What is it? What's happened?

She rushes to them as she speaks. Tirzah clings to her mother, sobbing.

TIRZAH
Mother, I was just watching the
Romans when...when...

BEN HUR
One of the tiles was loose. It
fell and struck the governor...

TIRZAH (terrified)
It wasn't my fault. It was...

MIRIAM (horror)
Judah, they won't believe her.

BEN HUR (cutting in)
She's not to say anything! You hear
me, Tirzah? Say nothing.

The sounds are closer, inside the house: doors slammed, chairs overturned, the tramp of booted feet.

BEN HUR
I'll speak to them...

115X1
CONT'D
(2)

He strides down the stairs.

COURTYARD

115X2

He stops abruptly. A soldier has just come in, drawn sword in hand. He approaches Ben Hur. Several other soldiers appear, all with naked blades ready for use. They move toward Ben Hur warily, then pause, waiting for orders, as the Centurion enters, his glance taking in everything. He indicates Ben Hur.

CENTURION
That's the man. Arrest him!

Two of the soldiers seize Ben Hur.

BEN HUR
Wait a moment. Let me tell you
what happened. It was an accident.
I was there on the roof...

He stops. Drusus has just appeared in the courtyard. He surveys the tableau before him, then moves forward a few paces. The Centurion again indicates Ben Hur.

CENTURION
This is the man, sir. We saw him.

BEN HUR (breaking in)
I tell you it was an accident...

DRUSUS (coldly)
Accident!
(sharply)
Arrest him!
(indicating Miriam and Tirzah)
Arrest all of them!

The soldiers start to pull Ben Hur away, but he holds back.

BEN HUR (desperately)
I swear to you...it was an accident!
I put my hand on the ledge...a tile
was loose...it gave way...

A cry from Tirzah interrupts him. Soldiers are seizing Miriam and Tirzah. The girl, sobbing, terrified, clings to her mother and has to be separated from her by force. At this moment Messala enters. He is contained, expressionless.

TIRZAH
Judah! Judah!

115X2
CONT'D
(2)

BEN HUR
Messala, in the name of God! Tell
them it's a mistake. The tile slipped.
It was an accident!

DRUSUS (to Messala)
He has admitted it was his hand that
"touched" the tile.

Messala looks at them all a moment, pondering. Then
he nods. The soldiers start to lead the women out.

BEN HUR
Messala, let them go! They had
nothing to do with it, nothing!

But he has been led out by the two soldiers.

As Miriam and Tirzah are led past Messala, Miriam looks
at him gravely.

MIRIAM
We loved you. What has happened
to the past?

Messala looks at her silently, his face cold, expression-
less.

DRUSUS
Come along.

They are led out.

CLOSE SHOT - MESSALA

116X1

He is alone now in the courtyard. He is thoughtful
for a moment. Then he goes.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CASTLE OF ANTONIO - MAIN ENTRY - DAY

117

Simonides and Esther enter, white-faced, tense, anxious.
After a moment the sound of footsteps can be heard. They
look in the direction of the sound.

WIDER ANGLE

118

Messala is just entering the citadel, followed by Drusus and several other officers. Sentries, stationed two at the entrance, come to attention stiffly. Messala crosses with Drusus to the main corridor. Simonides rises, moves tentatively toward the Tribune.

SIMONIDES

Tribune...

A sentry bars the way.

SIMONIDES

Tribune, please. I must speak to you.
I am steward of the House of Hur...

ANGLE TOWARD MESSALA

119

He stops, turns back, regards Simonides and Esther curiously.

MESSALA

Let them through.

The sentry steps aside. Simonides and Esther go to Messala.

MOVING SHOT - SIMONIDES AND ESTHER

120

as they come to Messala.

MESSALA

Old Simonides. I remember you well.
(looks at Esther curiously)
Your daughter?

SIMONIDES

Yes, Tribune. My daughter Esther. We were on our way to Antioch when we heard what had happened. Judah Ben Hur could not have done this thing! You knew him, Tribune!

MESSALA

Better, it seems, than you.
(coldly)
The prisoners have been sentenced.

SIMONIDES (unbelieving)

Sentenced?

ESTHER

Oh no...no...no! He's innocent.
I know he's innocent!

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SIMONIDES (urgently)
What is going to be done with them?

120
CONT'D
(2)

MESSALA
That is our concern.
(snapping)
Drusus! This man had better be kept
here, until we've time to question him.

ESTHER (desperately)
Tribune, please listen!

Messala exits, as Drusus begins to lead Simonides and
Esther away.

DISSOLVE TO:

121-121
OUT

INT. BEN HUR'S CELL

124

A barren stone room with a small barred window. Ben Hur
stands at the window, one hand gripping a bar. He stares
out at the city: suddenly he turns away, moves aimlessly
around the cell. He pauses at a sound, the rasp of
metal on metal. The door opens. A Roman officer enters.
Two soldiers stand behind him, blocking the doorway.

OFFICER
Come.

Ben Hur's glance goes to the soldiers.

BEN HUR
Where?

OFFICER
Tirus.

BEN HUR (aghast)
Tirus?

There is a moment of silence. The knowledge that he has
been condemned seems to have numbed Ben Hur. The officer
nods to the soldiers; they come into the cell.

BEN HUR (outburst)
But I've had no trial! I'm to die in the
galleys without... There's no truth in the
charge... Do you hear me? Not a word of
truth!
(seized by sudden and terrible fear)
My mother? My sister? What's happened to
them? Where are they?

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OFFICER

Come.

BEN HUR (frantically)

But at least tell me if they are safe...

OFFICER

I can tell you nothing!

He motions to the soldiers. They step up to Ben Hur, begin to tie his wrists behind him with a leather thong. For an instant he stands shocked, irresolute, submitting. Then he convulsively wrenches his arms free. He strikes one of the soldiers a heavy blow. He seizes the second soldier and hurls him against the officer. Before the Romans can recover from the surprise attack, Ben Hur runs out of the cell, slamming the door behind him.

CORRIDOR OUTSIDE THE CELL

A long narrow stone passage. Wildly Ben Hur runs to the end of the passage, turns into another corridor.

SECOND CORRIDOR

He comes face to face with a guard. He bulls into the surprised man, knocking him to the floor while he is still trying to draw his sword. Before the man can get back to his feet, Ben Hur runs the length of the corridor like a crazed animal.

ANGLE AT THE END OF THE CORRIDOR

A long steep flight of stone stairs leads to a lower floor. Ben Hur plunges recklessly down the stairs, falls, but scrambles quickly to his feet.

ANGLE AT BOTTOM OF STAIRS

There is a circular chamber, with four corridors leading into it, like the spokes of a wheel. Ben Hur dashes across the chamber, enters one of the corridors.

124
CONT'D
(2)

125

126

127

128

INT. CORRIDOR

129

This is the main corridor of the citadel. At the far end two guards are stationed. Hearing Ben Hur's footsteps and the distant shouts of his pursuers, the guards turn and start toward him. He pauses, takes a heavy spear from one of the weapon racks. The soldiers stop, draw their swords. Ben Hur advances toward them, spear aloft, ready to hurl. He moves stealthily down the corridor until he reaches the door to Messala's quarters. There, suddenly, he stops, kicks the door open, enters. The soldiers, surprised, rush forward.

INT. MESSALA'S QUARTERS

130

Messala, sitting at the table, looks up in amazement as Ben Hur moves swiftly across the room, pauses where he can face both Messala and the door. An instant later the soldiers enter. There is a moment when no one moves.

BEN HUR (hoarsely)

Send them out, Messala!

The soldiers wait for the Tribune's orders. Messala never takes his eyes from Ben Hur.

MESSALA (to soldiers)

You may go.

Slowly the soldiers back out. Ben Hur and Messala are alone.

BEN HUR (finally)

Where are my mother and sister?

MESSALA

Here, within these walls. The governor is recovering... They won't die. Of course they will be sentenced but...

BEN HUR (agonized)

Is it possible, Messala? Is it possible for you to do this -- to us -- a family you've known -- loved?

(brokenly)

Messala, don't. Please. Not to them.

MESSALA (evenly)

I asked you to share the future with me. You refused.

BEN HUR

But I didn't try to kill the
governor. You know that. I'm
not mad... I'm not a murderer.

130
CONT'D
(2)

MESSALA

I know you're not.

BEN HUR (astonished)

You know?

MESSALA

Of course. But we need an example:
we need you.

(smiles)

Remember? I wanted you to help me rise
in the world. Well, you have. I am
thought a hero for condemning my old
friend...and better yet, I am feared.

BEN HUR (with horror)

You are -- evil.

MESSALA

No, Judah, I am not evil. But I must
serve Rome as best I can. Making an
example of you will discourage treason...

BEN HUR

But my family -- Messala, I beg you.
Let them go!

MESSALA (suddenly)

Beg? I begged you once... Judah,
it is out of my hands. Roman justice
is inexorable.

Ben Hur lofts his spear.

BEN HUR

And so is God's...

MESSALA (hard)

Kill me -- and your mother and sister
will die today, nailed to crosses in
front of you. Go on, Judah. Kill me!

CLOSER SHOT - BEN HUR

131

He stands for a moment with the spear lofted.
Suddenly he hurls it.

WIDER ANGLE

132

He has thrown the spear in, a few feet to one side of Messala. It sticks quivering in a beam. The Roman sits without moving.

BEN HUR (in a choked voice)
Messala, the God of my fathers is
vengeful. I will pray that you live
till I return.

MESSALA (drily)
Return?

Ben Hur's eyes blaze with hatred. Messala doesn't move. He meets Ben Hur's glance steadily. Messala rises, comes close to Ben Hur. He stands there confronting him. He is about to strike Ben Hur, then controls himself. Instead he moves to the door, calls the guards. They enter.

MESSALA (to the guards)
Take him!

As the guards pinion Ben Hur and walk him out, Messala watching --

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE SHOT - SIMONIDES AND ESTHER
INT. CITADEL - NIGHT

133

The only movement comes from the shadows cast by smoking torches. Presently there are sounds -- footsteps echoing distantly, muffled voices. Esther raises her head, listens.

ESTHER
Father...

A WIDER ANGLE

134

The sentries are silent, motionless in their places. At one end of the entry is an arch, blocked off by iron bars. Lights flicker from behind and below it. Simonides and Esther rise, move toward the arch.

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ANGLE AT ARCH - THROUGH THE HEAVY BARS.

135

Simonides and Esther come up to the arch, look through the bars.

About fifteen feet below the floor level is a subterranean passage leading from the dungeons under the citadel to the outside. A group of prisoners wait in the passage: about twenty, shackled together. A detachment of Roman cavalymen stand by their mounts while guards check the prisoners.

CLOSE SHOT - SIMONIDES AND ESTHER

136

They watch fearfully. After a moment, Esther draws in her breath, sharply, painfully. Simonides' whole body seems to stiffen.

WHAT THEY SEE

137

Directly below them, two more prisoners are being led out from the dungeons, their hands bound behind them. One is Ben Hur. He and his fellow prisoner are led to the waiting group, shackled to the others. The cavalymen swing into their saddles. Commands are heard. The prisoners are marched away between the lines of the horsemen.

CLOSE SHOT - SIMONIDES AND ESTHER

138

They watch starkly. Gradually the sounds of the horses and men die away.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. JUDEAN DESERT - DAY - EXTREME LONG SHOT

139

Buzzards circle patiently in the burning sky. Far below them, plodding slowly across the sand, is the cavalcade of Romans and their prisoners. The decurion rides in front. Behind him stumble the prisoners, a central chain links them all. Soldiers ride on the flanks and behind.

DISSOLVE TO:

ANGLE

140

The cavalcade coming directly toward the CAMERA. Even the mounted soldiers are suffering from heat and exhaustion. The prisoners, staggering on foot and half dead, caked with dust and dirt, are barely able to remain erect. Suddenly the first prisoner pitches forward, falls. The decurion raises his hand, bringing the columns to a halt. One of the soldiers dismounts, walks over to the prone figure.

CLOSER SHOT

141

The soldier prods the fallen prisoner with his foot. Satisfied that he is dead, the soldier unsheathes his dagger, cuts the leather thong which holds the man to the chain.

WIDER ANGLE

142

The soldier remounts. The decurion signals with his hand, rides forward.

CLOSER SHOT - THE PRISONERS

143

They begin to move again. One steps over the dead man, not bothering to look down. Another stumbles against the body, staggering. Ben Hur appears next. His face is black with dirt, drawn and lined with pain. He looks down sullenly, steps laboriously over the dead man, goes woodenly on his way.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A VILLAGE WELL - DAY

144

In the center of a tiny village, in pleasant country of verdant fields and orchards which can be glimpsed in background. Olive trees grow around the well, making it a cool sanctuary.

The people at the well, a woman and several men, are staring off at the Roman cavalrymen riding slowly down the street with the stumbling, staggering prisoners. Sheep roaming the street, bleat and move out of the soldiers' path. The villagers, intimidated, move back to a respectful distance as the grim cavalcade approaches. With a hand signal the decurion brings the column to a halt near the well. The prisoners stand in their tracks, wretched and miserable. A few collapse. The Romans dismount stiffly. The decurion indicates two village men.

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DECURION

You... and you. Water for the
prisoners!

144
CONT'D
(2)

He moves toward the well, unbuckling his helmet.

CLOSER SHOT - THE TWO VILLAGERS

145

One is little more than a boy. The other is middle-aged, a simple, kindly faced peasant. Being singled out by the Roman has frightened them a little, but they move toward the well to obey his orders.

ANGLE AT WELL

146

The two villagers fill gourds with water. The Romans are refreshing themselves; some splashing their faces with water from the buckets on the edge of the well, others filling their helmets and drinking from them. The villagers leave the well with their gourds, THE CAMERA MOVING WITH THEM. The older villager goes to the first prisoner, who stretches out his bound hands awkwardly, seizes the gourd to his parched lips.

The boy goes to the second prisoner, who drinks just as frantically. For an instant the CAMERA HOLDS ON THEM, then MOVES to the third prisoner, Ben Hur. He sways slightly, dizzy with exhaustion. At last the older villager approaches him. Ben Hur reaches out his bound hands. The villager, looking at him compassionately, extends the gourd.

DECURION'S VOICE

No water for him!

For an instant the villager hesitates, holding the gourd near Ben Hur's hands; then he withdraws it and reluctantly moves away. Ben Hur stands there, swaying, too weak to protest, overwhelmed by this cruelty.

CLOSE SHOT - BEN HUR

147

He collapses, falling slowly forward, his face going into the dirt.

CLOSE SHOT -- A GOURD ON THE EDGE OF THE WELL

148

A hand -- a strong young man's hand -- takes the gourd, fills it with sparkling clear water, carries it away. CAMERA PANS WITH GOURD to

CLOSE SHOT - BEN HUR

149

He sprawls in the dust of the street where he has fallen. He doesn't move. His eyes are closed. The hand with the gourd appears, bringing the water close to Ben Hur's face. His eyes open. He stares unbelievably. He lifts his head, gets his lips to the gourd, drinks of the healing water. A hand touches his forehead and Ben Hur looks up, wonderingly. The torment seems to go out of him.

ANGLE NEAR THE WELL

150

The Romans are still refreshing themselves. Taking a deep drink, the decurion wipes his mouth with the back of his hand. He glances at the prisoners. His face darkens with anger. He steps to a horse, takes a whip.

A LONGER SHOT TOWARD THE DECURION

151

Whip in hand, he starts purposely forward. As he comes closer, the figure of Ben Hur's benefactor rises in the foreground, holding the gourd. The young man has glowing chestnut-colored hair and wears a simple woolen tunic. His face cannot be seen. He stands there, back to CAMERA, watching the approaching Roman. Suddenly the decurion stops.

CLOSE SHOT - THE DECURION

152

He seems spellbound, perplexed, confused. Slowly he lowers the whip. For a moment he stands irresolutely, his glance riveted on the unseen figure. He moves back a step or two, awkwardly, still staring. Then he moves back another step or two. He finds himself near a villager, but he never takes his eyes from the unseen young man.

DECURION

Who is that, with the prisoner?

VILLAGER

He is the son of Joseph, the
carpenter of Nazareth.

152
CONT'D
(2)

The decurion continues to stare at the son of Joseph. Finally with an effort, he looks around, breathes deeply.

DECURION (gruffly)

All right, all right! On your feet!

153
OUT

CLOSE SHOT - BEN HUR

154

He rises. Behind him other prisoners are getting to their feet. Ben Hur pays no attention to the activity around him as he looks off at the unseen young man.

A LONGER SHOT - TOWARDS THE PRISONERS AND ROMANS

155

Ben Hur still stands there, his glance following the unseen figure of his benefactor. In the close foreground is a carpenter's bench, and on it a piece of wood with a saw halfway through it. The hands of the young man appear as he takes the saw, resumes the task of sawing the wood. As the saw moves in the f.g. a shouted command is heard, and in the b.g. the Romans swing into their saddles, ride off down the street with the column of trudging prisoners. The saw continues to move steadily.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE OPEN SEA - DAY

156

Across the sparkling blue Mediterranean comes a galley of the Imperial Roman Navy, a long, narrow fighting ship built for speed, low-masted, square sailed, its bow tapering sharply to a vicious iron-snouted battering ram.

A ship approaches swiftly, using both sails and oars. There are a hundred and twenty oars, sixty to each side, rising and falling in perfect rhythm.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MAIN CABIN OF THE GALLEY - FULL SHOT FROM BOW TO AFT 157

This is the ship, about 80 feet long. On either side of the hull, running the length of the cabin, are platforms for the rowers. They are naked except for loin clothes: their backs, gleaming with perspiration, muscles straining, move in perfect time to the beat of the hortator (or rowing master) who sits at a raised table at the aft-end of the cabin, pounding out the tempo with a gavel. Above the hortator is a platform with a gilded railing, the commander's platform, empty at the moment. There are six guards, two on either side of the sounding table, whips in hand, two at the forward end of the cabin, and two who pace up and down watching the rowers.

The only SOUND is the steady, inexorable beat of the hortator's gavel.

CLOSER SHOT - HORTATOR AND GUARDS

158

The hortator is a powerfully built man, wearing a military tunic and a sword. On one side of his sounding table is a water clock. As he beats out the tempo for the rowing, he keeps a close expert eye on the slaves before and below him.

An officer enters.

OFFICER (to hortator)

In a few minutes the Consul's barge will be coming alongside. Be ready to raise oars.

Officer exits. The Chief of Rowers notices something he doesn't like. He speaks to one of the guards.

CHIEF OF ROWERS

Number Forty.

Guard quickly moves forward.

ANGLE FOLLOWING THE GUARD

159

He walks along past the rowers, each one of whom has a number painted above him on the hull of the ship. He pauses near Number Forty, who is pulling weakly on his oar, and delivers a stinging blow of the whip across the man's back. The slaves around No. 40 pay no heed to this; they continue to row methodically, stolidly. CAMERA REMAINS ON THEM after the guard has moved away.

Number Forty-One raises his head as he takes a stroke. It is Ben Hur. He is greatly changed, tremendously developed, heavily muscled.

Suddenly the beat of the hortator's gavel stops. At the same moment, with machine-like precision, the slaves stop rowing, holding their oars.

HORTATOR'S VOICE

Raise oars!

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Each rower pushes sharply downward on his oar. After a moment, another command.

159
CONT'D
(2)

HORTATOR'S VOICE

Down oars!

As one, the rowers push their heavy oars violently above their heads, plunging them downward into the sea in a braking movement that brings the ship to a stop. Running feet can be heard on the deck above, and the shouted orders of officers.

CLOSE SHOT - NUMBER FORTY-TWO

160

Forty-two darts a quick look through his oar-hole, then speaks in a whisper, hardly moving his lips, his eyes straight ahead.

NUMBER FORTY-TWO

An Imperial barge!

CLOSE SHOT - NUMBER FORTY-THREE

161

Eyes to the front, he whispers hoarsely.

NUMBER FORTY-THREE

The new commander, Quintus Arrius.
I heard them say...

CLOSE SHOT - NUMBER FORTY-TWO

162

His voice is heavy with despair.

NUMBER FORTY-TWO

Arrius...Slaves don't live long
under Arrius.

A TRUMPET SOUNDS.

CLOSE SHOT - THE MAST TOP

163

While the trumpet salute continues, the pennant of the fleet commander is hauled to the top of the mast. In the far background can be seen the quays and buildings of a Roman naval base, purple highlands rising behind them. THE CAMERA TILTS DOWNWARD TO A

HIGH ANGLE SHOT - THE DECK BELOW

164

Soldiers are at their stations. Imperial marines in burnished armour are lined up stiffly at attention, the officers in front of their ranks. From a barge made fast to the galley, Quintus Arrius, wearing a purple-bordered toga, is being piped aboard, followed by his staff.

ANGLE ON FOREDECK OF GALLEY

165

As the notes of the trumpet end, Arrius pauses on the foredeck to receive the salutes of his officer. He is a bull of a man, about 50 years old. He rakes the deck, the marines, the officers, with a sharp glance that doesn't miss anything. Then he faces his assembled officers.

ARRIUS

You know that a fleet of Macedonian galleys have been raiding Roman commerce. The Emperor has honoured us with the task of seeking out and destroying them.

He turns, crosses to the altar built low near the bow of the ship.

CLOSE SHOT - AT ALTAR

166

Arrius kneels. An officer hands him a basket of salt and barley which Arrius sprinkles before the altar.

ARRIUS

Oh Great Neptune, lord of the seas,
I appeal to thee and beg thee kindly
to grant thy help to the fleet under
my command -- so that it can safely
sail and happily overcome the enemy.

Another officer hands him a flaming stick, and Arrius ignites a bowl of incense before the altar.

ARRIUS

The smoke is to the east. The
augury is good.

He rises.

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ANOTHER ANGLE

167

Arrius passes along the ranks of marines and sailors, eyeing them critically. When he reaches the end of the ranks, he stops and turns to an officer, the chief of rowers.

ARRIUS

How many rowers?

CHIEF OF ROWERS

Two hundred, consul.

ARRIUS

Reliefs?

CHIEF OF ROWERS

Of forty -- every hour.

Arrius nods, strides to the hatch, descends, followed by the chief of rowers and other officers.

INT. MAIN CABIN BELOW DECKS - FULL SHOT

168

Arrius pauses on the commander's platform, glances at the galley slaves standing motionless below, holding their oars. The hortator is stiffly at attention. Arrius comes down the stairs. He regards the hortator sharply, then descends to the cabin, followed by the officers.

ANGLE FOLLOWING ARRIUS

169

Arrius takes a whip from one of the guards and walks along, inspecting the rowers. He pauses now and then to look at a man closely, sometimes to prod a man's shoulder muscles with the butt end of his whip. He stops at Number Twenty-two. The slave seems to shrink under his steady gaze.

ARRIUS

This man is ill. Replace him.

A guard takes the man by the arm and leads him away, as Arrius continues his inspection. He walks along, eyeing the slaves sharply. He stops beside a man who has red welts on his back.

ARRIUS (to chief of rowers)

You've had trouble with this one?

CHIEF OF ROWERS

He is insubordinate, consul.

ARRIUS
That will stop.

169
CONT'D
(2)

He looks at the man coldly and goes on. Arrius pauses again, prods Ben Hur's shoulder with the whip. Ben Hur continues to look straight ahead.

ARRIUS
What service have you seen?

BEN HUR
One month less a day in this ship.

ARRIUS (dryly)
You keep an exact account. And before?

BEN HUR
Three years in other ships.

ARRIUS (startled)
Three years!

Ben Hur keeps his eyes to the front. Arrius studies him for an instant, then moves away. Suddenly, however, he turns back, strikes Ben Hur a stinging blow across the shoulder with the butt of the whip. Ben Hur starts forward in anger, but stops abruptly. Arrius smiles.

ARRIUS
You have the spirit to fight back, but the intelligence not to. Your eyes are full of hate, number forty-one. That's good. Hate keeps a man alive. It gives him strength.
(ironically)
Love, of course, would be better. It has an inflexible strength, as the poets tell us. Propelled by love, this ship would move faster than the wind.
(turning, addressing the whole cabin)
Mark me, all of you who can! You are condemned men. You will live only as long as you serve this ship. Mark me and row well!

He strides away, followed by his officers.

ANGLE NEAR THE SOUNDING TABLE

170

The hortator stands at attention. Arrius pauses near the table, turns to an officer.

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ARRIUS

We join our fleet at the Straits of Messina. Set your course past the Caponellan Cape.

170
CONT'D
(2)

The officer salutes.

OFFICER

Consul!

He goes up the steps. Arrius turns to the hortator.

ARRIUS

We must be in the Straits at dawn.

HORTATOR (saluting)

Consul!

Arrius goes up the stairs, followed by the remaining officers. The hortator grasps his gavel, sits down. Guards take up stations on either side of him.

ANGLE ON COMMANDER'S PLATFORM (directly above hortator) 171

Arrius stands at the gilded rail, looking down on the rowers. The chief of rowers takes a position near Arrius where he can relay commands to an officer at the hatch above, and to the hortator below. Shouted orders on deck can be heard.

VOICE OF DECK OFFICER

Anchors fast. Course south by the Cape!

CHIEF OF ROWERS

Ship ready, consul.

ARRIUS

Strike oars.

CHIEF OF ROWERS (calling)

Strike oars!

HORTATOR'S VOICE

Strike oars!

FULL SHOT - INT. MAIN CABIN, FROM BEHIND ARRIUS

172

Moving as one, the galley slaves take their stances, gripping the oars. The hortator brings his gavel down heavily on the sounding table; the 120 bodies strain backward in a great sweeping movement that sends the ship forward. As the hortator continues his cadence, the bodies sway backward and forward in a steady powerful rhythm.

DISSOLVE:

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EXT. GALLEY - NIGHT

173

Sails full bellied with wind, oars flashing silver in the moonlight, the galley plunges through the sea.

DISSOLVE TO:

AFTER DECK OF GALLEY - NIGHT

174

Arrius stands alone at the rail, staring out across the blue-black sea, savouring the salt spray. He has removed his toga and wears a short military tunic and sword. The rigging sings: the sea slaps and gurgles against the hull as the rhythmically sweeping oars hurl the ship forward.

Suddenly the oars stop moving and all together are lifted high above the sea, where they remain stationary. The maneuver breaks Arrius' spell. He takes his glance from the dark distant sea, moves to the hatch leading below.

INT. MAIN CABIN OF GALLEY - FULL SHOT TOWARD
COMMANDER'S PLATFORM

175

Arrius comes down the stairs, joins the chief of rowers on the platform. Below, the rowers stand like statues, holding their oars. A relief of forty has just been brought in from the slave quarters in the bow of the ship. The forty new men stand by the rowers they are to relieve. A guard signals to the hortator.

HORTATOR

Change oars!

The forty relief rowers, with perfect precision, step to the side and grip the oars. The men being relieved relinquish the oars, step backward one pace, take another pace toward the center. At a signal from the guards they march toward the forward hold, stooping to enter the low hatch leading to their quarters.

HORTATOR

Strike oars!

The slaves take rowing stances. The hortator brings his gavel down on the sounding table and the rowers, as one, resume rowing.

CLOSER SHOT - ON COMMANDER'S PLATFORM

176

Arrius seated, watching rowers, eyes on Ben Hur as they go at ramming speed.

ARRIUS

Rest.

LONG SHOT - ROWERS

177

At ramming speed. Many of them, exhausted, fall over the oars. They hear line "Rest" and stop rowing.

CLOSE SHOT - TOWARD ARRIUS ON COMMANDER'S PLATFORM

178

He rises, goes toward cabin door in background and beckons to Captain, who enters.

ARRIUS

Number Forty-one, why was he condemned?

CAPTAIN

He attempted to kill the Governor of Judea.

Arrius regards Ben Hur with renewed interest.

ARRIUS

He has the look of a man who longs to go back and finish what he began.

Arrius smiles, glances toward Ben Hur, then turns to his cabin.

CLOSE SHOT - BEN HUR

179

Standing at oar, watching.

AN ANGLE TOWARD ARRIUS, INCLUDING THE
HORTATOR BELOW HIM

180

Arrius continues to study the slave.

ARRIUS (presently)
Battle speed, hortator.

The hortator glances upward in surprise.

HORTATOR
Battle speed!

He quickens his beat.

FULL SHOT

181

The rowers look around alarmed, bewildered, respond
to the faster tempo, straining every muscle.

CLOSE SHOT - ARRIUS

182

He watches Ben Hur.

CLOSE SHOT - BEN HUR

183

He bends his oar with long, seemingly effortless strokes.
He glances upward, almost challengingly, at Arrius.

ANGLE TOWARD ARRIUS, CHIEF OF ROWERS AND HORTATOR

184

Arrius watches impassively for a moment. Then:

ARRIUS
Attack speed.

HORTATOR
Attack speed!

Amazed, he speeds up the beat again. The chief of rowers
looks at Arrius curiously.

FULL SHOT TOWARD ROWERS

185

They bend and pull with furious intensity, as
they respond to the new rhythm.

ANGLE TOWARD COMMANDER'S PLATFORM

186

Arrius stares down at Ben Hur. The ship shudders and pitches as the flying oars send it hurtling across the sea. The chief of rowers looks wonderingly at Arrius, who continues to appraise Ben Hur.

ARRIUS (finally)

Ramming speed.

HORTATOR

Ramming speed!

Again the bewildered man quickens the beat.

FULL SHOT TOWARD ROWERS

187

The new stroke is a killing one, used only for short bursts of speed. The slaves are panting, gasping, fighting for breath.

CLOSE SHOT - BEN HUR

188

He looks up at Arrius wonderingly, but bends the long oar backward and forward without flinching.

CLOSE SHOT - ARRIUS

189

Suddenly a gasping choking scream is heard.

Arrius doesn't take his glance from Ben Hur.

FULL SHOT TOWARD ROWERS

190

One of the slaves has broken under the strain, collapsing over his oar, gasping. A guard moves up swiftly, whips the exhausted man. It has no effect on him. An instant later several other rowers snap.

CLOSE SHOT - HORTATOR

191

Beads of perspiration stand out on his forehead as he continues the lethal tempo.

ANGLE TOWARD COMMANDER'S PLATFORM

192

Implacably, Arrius watches Ben Hur as the oarsmen send the ship flying.

ARRIUS

Normal speed.

HORTATOR

Normal speed!

He slows the beat.

FULL SHOT

193

The rowers reduce speed. The tension seems to go out of the cabin.

CLOSE SHOT - BEN HUR

194

Rowing, he glances contemptuously upward at Arrius.

ANGLE ON COMMANDER'S PLATFORM

195

The ghost of a smile plays on the Roman's face. He rises. He continues to look at Ben Hur for a moment. The chief of rowers eyes the commander wonderingly. Arrius moves to the back of the platform, takes off his sword, throws himself down on his couch.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE SHOT - THE LOOK-OUT IN THE MAST OF THE GALLEY -
DAWN

196

He peers out to sea.

LOOK-OUT (shouting)

Sails ho!

He points.

ANGLE ON AFTER DECK OF GALLEY

197

Arrius and his officers move to the rail of the elevated after-deck, looking in the direction indicated by the sailor.

WHAT THEY SEE

198

Far away, ruddy with the dawn, the sails of a hundred war galleys can be seen.

GROUP SHOT - ARRIUS AND HIS OFFICERS (BLUE BACKING)

199

watching the sails in the background. Arrius turns to his officers.

ARRIUS (points to galleys)

Signal the fleet we'll sweep the Ionian Sea from west to east with one league between each galley.

(grimly)

Somewhere between Andros and the coast, we should find the Macedonian pirates.

The officers salute.

OFFICERS

Consul!

Arrius turns, descends to the lower deck.

ANGLE ON LOWER DECK

200

Arrius crosses to the altar in bow of the ship. An officer is waiting with a basket of salt and barley. He gives it to Arrius, salutes, goes below.

CLOSER SHOT - AT ALTAR

201

Alone, Arrius kneels. His attitude is that of one at prayer, but he doesn't pray. He is preoccupied, thoughtful. He remains in that attitude for several moments. A shadow passes over him and the altar. Startled, he looks around.

REVERSE ANGLE -

202

Ben Hur looms large behind Arrius. The Consul, frowning, gets to his feet.

CONSUL

Why are you here?

BEN HUR
I was ordered to report to you when
my relief took over.

202
CONT'D.
(2)

ARRIUS (remembering)
Yes, of course. I had forgotten.

He regards Ben Hur appraisingly.

ARRIUS
You could have killed me as I knelt,
and escaped. You're a condemned man.
Why didn't you?

BEN HUR
I'm not ready to die.

ARRIUS (dryly)
What do you think will save you?

BEN HUR
The God of my fathers.

ARRIUS (thoughtfully)
You're a Jew, aren't you?

BEN HUR
As my forefathers were, long before
the world had ever seen a Roman.

Arrius smiles faintly.

ARRIUS (thoughtfully)
Your God has forsaken you. He has no
more power than the images I pray to.
(seeing Ben Hur's puzzled expression)
I pray only because it is expected of me.
It comforts the men. Religion is neces-
sary as long as men fear death.
(faint smile)
My gods will not help me. Your God will
not help you. I might.
(He pauses, watching Ben Hur's reaction)
Does that interest you, forty-one? I see
that it does.
(studying him critically)
I am a fighting man by profession, forty-
one, and in my leisure moments it amuses
me to train fighting men. I own some of
the best gladiators and charioteers in
Rome. Would you like to become one of them?

BEN HUR
To die as your slave?

ARRIUS
Better than to live chained below these
decks.

BEN HUR (calmly)
I will not be here forever.

Arrius glances at him sharply.

202
CONT'D.
(3)

ARRIUS
What would you do if you escaped
Forty-One?

BEN HUR
My mother and sister were imprisoned
with me, even though they were inno-
cent. I will not rest until I know
they're free.

ARRIUS
You do not say you were innocent.

BEN HUR
Would it do any good to say it again?

ARRIUS
No.
(significantly)
Consider carefully what I have offered.
You'll never escape while we're
victorious. You think if the Macedonians
defeat us they'll set you free? You're
wrong. You will sink with this ship,
chained to your oar.

BEN HUR
God has not let me live these three
years to die chained to an oar.

Arrius stares at him in amazement and envy.

ARRIUS
It's a strange, stubborn faith you
keep, to believe existence has a
purpose. A sane man would have learned
to lose it, long before this.

BEN HUR (hard)
As you have. What drove it out of you?

ARRIUS (almost before he knows
he has said it)
It died with my wife and son.
(He is immediately cold and remote
again)
Go back to your oar, Forty-One.

Ben Hur turns and walks away. Arrius watches him go.
DISSOLVE TO 203

FULL SHOT - THE FLEET - DAY

203

Arrius' galley joins the fleet. The galleys are fan-
ned out across the sea, using both sails and oars.
DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MAIN CABIN OF ARRIUS' GALLEY - FULL SHOT
TOWARD COMMANDER'S PLATFORM - DAWN

204

Flickering, smoking oil lamps along the center of the cabin give light. The slaves toil at their oars. The beat of the hortator is slower. THE CAMERA MOVES over the perspiring backs of the rowers to a

CLOSER SHOT - COMMANDER'S PLATFORM

205

Arrius can be seen resting on his couch at the back of the platform. An officer comes down from the deck, salutes Arrius.

OFFICER

Enemy sighted, Consul.

Arrius swings around and sits up.

ARRIUS

Prepare for battle. Signal the fleet.

OFFICER

Consul.

The officer goes up on deck. Arrius rises, walks forward to the rail.

CHIEF OF ROWERS

Lock rowers!

HORTATOR'S VOICE

Lock rowers!

From above a trumpet SOUNDS. Running feet, shouted orders can be HEARD. Arrius exits to deck.

MEDIUM SHOT - DECK (BLUE BACKING)

205X1

Arrius comes up on deck, looks at the pirate fleet in the distance.

FULL SHOT - CABIN

206

The guards put down their whips and begin to run a long chain through the manacles which are locked to the ankle of each slave. The slaves continue rowing but there is terror in every eye.

ANGLE ON COMMANDER'S PLATFORM

207

Arrius enters from deck, watches the locking-in. A sailor brings a breastplate to Arrius, who starts to put it on.

FULL SHOT - DECK OF ARRIUS' GALLEY - DAWN

208

It is alive with activity, sailors going to their battle stations, all the machines of war being looked to. Marines are bringing out spears, javelins, bows and arrows -- jars of inflammable oil, and baskets of cotton balls.

CLOSER SHOT - A MARINE

209

He prepares rocket at catapult, ignites the ball. On a signal from an officer, he fires it.

FULL SHOT -- THE FLEET

210

The rocket makes a fiery arc in the night sky. An instant later another flaming rocket shoots into the sky from another galley. A series of flaming arcs go from ship to ship, signalling the order to attack.

INT. MAIN CABIN

211

The guards are finishing the locking-in of the rowers. Arrius is now wearing breastplate and helmet. The sailor brings his sword and belt, which Arrius buckles around his waist. He moves to the rail, looking down for a moment.

ARRIUS

Guard!

A guard comes up quickly below him. Arrius bends down, says something to him. The guard salutes, hurries away.

212 OUT

CLOSE SHOT - BEN HUR

213

The guard comes up and removes Ben Hur's leg manacles, freeing him. Amazed, Ben Hur looks up at Arrius.

ANGLE TOWARD ARRIUS

214

The Roman looks down with a faint smile. Then he goes up on deck.

CLOSE SHOT - NUMBER FORTY AND BEN HUR

215

As he rows, Number Forty stares at Ben Hur wonderingly.

NUMBER FORTY (whispering)
Forty-one, why -- why did he do that?

BEN HUR (whispering)
I don't know...

He rows for a moment.

BEN HUR (softly)
Once before a man helped me...
I didn't know why then....

He glances at Esther's slave-ring.

216 OUT

MEDIUM SHOT - ROMAN FLEET - DAWN

216X1

The galleys are progressing left to right.

CLOSE SHOT - DECK

216X2

OFFICER
Furl sails!

MEDIUM SHOT - ROMAN FLEET

216X3

We see sails on some of the galleys being furled.

MEDIUM SHOT OF THE PIRATE FLEET - DAWN

216X4

The pirate galleys are sailing right to left,
sails not yet furled.

FULL SHOT - INT. CABIN

217

A trumpet SOUNDS. An ominous silence pervades the cabin. The only SOUND is the throbbing rhythm of the hortator's gavel.

Suddenly a sobbing, hysterical laugh is HEARD. It is Number Twenty-Eight.

NUMBER TWENTY-EIGHT

(crying out)

We're going to die! We're going to die! We'll drown!

(screaming)

I want to live! I don't want to die!

CLOSER SHOT - NUMBER TWENTY-EIGHT

218

He begins to tug frantically on his leg manacles. Two guards whip him viciously. Raving, he pulls futilely on his chains, then falls to the floor. The guards unlock his chains, drag him away. The CAMERA MOVES WITH HIM a few feet to INCLUDE

A GROUP SHOT - BEN HUR AND THE SLAVES AROUND HIM

219

They continue rowing without looking at the slave, who is dragged away. Again the ominous quiet pervades the cabin.

BEN HUR (whispering tensely)

Forty-two, can you see anything?

The slave in front of Ben Hur glances furtively through his oar-hole.

NUMBER FORTY-TWO

Nothing.

Again they row in silence. Ben Hur hazards another glance through the oar-hole.

BEN HUR (whispering)

Look! What can you see?

Number Forty-two peers through the oar-hole as he strokes his oar.

NUMBER FORTY-TWO

Nothing but...No! Galleys! All around us!

VOICE OF CHIEF ROWERS
Battle speed!

219
CONT'D
(2)

HORTATOR'S VOICE
Battle speed!

The slaves look upward sharply, in fear.

MEDIUM LONG SHOT - SEA - BOTH FLEETS

219X1

They join in battle. At close range the battle starts.

CLOSE SHOT - ARRIUS ON DECK

219X2

Arrius gives orders to subordinates. The deck is a beehive of orderly confusion. (Blue Backing)

MEDIUM SHOT - DECK

219X3

Marines are operating catapults, lance "throwers" etc.

ARRIUS (to subordinate)
Steersmen right. Oar withdrawal
on command!

He looks off starboard bow and points to approaching Pirates.

ARRIUS
Attack speed!

The order echoes -- "Attack speed! Attack speed!"

FULL SHOT - INT. GALLEY

220

The order "Attack speed!" is relayed to the hortator. He quickens the beat. The rowers respond, lunging backward and forward. The din of battle above is HEARD.

MEDIUM LONG SHOT - BATTLE

220X1

Arrius' galley circles to sideswipe Pirate galley.

INT. GALLEY

220X2

CHIEF OF ROWERS
Left oars - withdraw on command!

VOICE FROM ABOVE
Withdraw!

CHIEF OF ROWERS
Withdraw!

As slaves start to pull in oars and guards wield whips to speed up maneuver.

EXT. CLOSE SHOT - ARRIUS' GALLEY

220X3

We see oars on port side as they are withdrawn.

EXT. MEDIUM LONG SHOT - BOTH GALLEYS

220X4

Arrius' galley sideswipes Pirate galley, splintering oars. The crashing shock of contact is audible above the shouts of men and the noise of the conflict.

MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT - ARRIUS ON DECK

220X5

Arrius is tensely watching the activity on the deck, as he paces back and forth he looks down through opening at the rowers below.

MEDIUM SHOT - HIS POINT OF VIEW

220XX5

Ben Hur and rowers round him. They extend oars and start rowing again.

MEDIUM SHOT - ARRIUS ON DECK

220X6

He looks up, calls to guard. Arrius says something to him, guard salutes, hurries away. Arrius looks off, reacts.

ARRIUS (shouting)
Steersmen! Ram course!

Ben Hur
Chgs.

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We hear the order repeated off scene.

220X6
CONT'D.
(2)

ARRIUS
Order below -- Ramming speed!

MEDIUM SHOT - EXT. BATTLE

220X7

Arrius' galley is closing in on the Pirate galley.

SEVERAL QUICK CUTS OF ARRIUS

220X8

Tense, deck activity, spears being hurled, fire balls from Pirate ship hitting galley.

220X9-220X11
OUT

MEDIUM SHOT - OR CLOSE SHOT

220X12

Arrius' galley closes and rams with a splintering crash into the side of the Pirate galley. The roaring shout of a Roman battlecry. The cries of hurt and torn men can be heard.

INT. GALLEY

220X13

The slaves stand by their oars stricken with fear. The shouts of men and the noise of the battle can be heard from the deck above. The guard we saw with Arrius on deck (Scene 220X6) enters, speaks to Chief of Rowers who reacts with surprise, then quickly walks towards Ben Hur.

CLOSE SHOT - BEN HUR

220XX13

The Chief of Rowers reaches down, hurriedly starts to unchain Ben Hur who looks on in amazement as do rowers around him. Chief of Rowers finishes unchaining Ben Hur; exits.

NUMBER FORTY (whispering)

Why -- did they unchain you?

BEN HUR (whispering)

I don't know ...

Slight pause.

BEN HUR

Once before a man helped me ...

I didn't know why then ...

Ben Hur
Chgs.

9-26-58

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VOICE OFF SCENE (from deck)
Back oars!

220XX13
CONT'D.
(2)

INT. GALLEY

220XXX13

HORTATOR
Back oars!

He resumes a slow beat. The rowers reverse their stroke moving the galley away from the galley it has rammed.

ON DECK SHOOTING UP AT FIGHTING TOWER

220X14

Arrius in foreground - officer on fighting tower shouting down to Arrius as he points off port side of galley. Arrius reacts.

WHAT ARRIUS SEES

220X15

Pirate, with fire-pots extended, heads dead into CAMERA.

DECK OF ARRIUS' GALLEY

220X16

Defensive action is being taken, catapults, spears, etc.

CLOSE SHOT - BOTH GALLEYS

220X17

Arrius' galley is backing away from Pirate he has just rammed, as the second Pirate slams into the forward port side of Arrius' galley, spilling fire onto the deck. Some of the fire spills over the side.

CLOSE SHOT - INT. GALLEY TOWARD OAR-HOLES

220X18

The slaves in immediate foreground are terror-stricken as we see fire cascading just outside oar-holes.

CLOSE SHOT - BEN HUR

220X19

His face is grim as he tries to see through the oar-hole.

ON DECK - NEAR FIGHTING TOWER (Blue Backing and Straight Shots)

220X20

The forward section of Arrius' ship is afire. Pirates have boarded and hand to hand battle rages. Arrius and his men fight valiantly as some of the sailors and marines try to quench the fire with water buckets. The Pirate galley has withdrawn.

INT. GALLEY - FULL SHOT

220X21

The slaves are frozen with terror. Suddenly a blood-curdling SCREAM heard above the din focuses attention on Number "Forty-three".

NUMBER FORTY THREE
We're going to be rammed!

CLOSE SHOT - NUMBER FORTY-THREE

221

He stares through oar-hole.

NUMBER FORTY THREE (shrieking)
We're going to be rammed!

In a sudden frenzy he drops his oar, pulls on his chains. Then he takes another terrified look through the oar-hole, paying no attention to the whips which strike him.

WHAT HE SEES

222

Framed in the oar-hole, a swiftly-approaching enemy galley can be seen, its oars churning the sea, as it attacks. The CRIES of other slaves can be heard. Closer and closer the battering ram rushes, charging straight toward the oar-hole until nothing but the great iron snout can be seen.

FULL SHOT - INT. CABIN

223

with a rending, grinding crash the beak of the enemy galley knifes through the hull, snapping the great oak timbers. Some of the slaves are crushed by the ram, others are impaled by the splintered oars. A torrent of water pours in, swiftly flooding the cabin. The SHRIEKS of the dying and wounded mingle with the SCREAMS of rowers who are trying to pull free of their chains. The guards run to the stairs, where they follow the hortator to the deck.

CLOSE SHOT - BEN HUR

224

He is still in his place, the water at his knees. Dazed, he looks around. Then he remembers he is free. He staggers to the middle of the cabin. A man SCREAMS.

MAN

Help me! Help me!

Ben Hur starts toward the man. At that moment one of the timbers supporting the deck breaks, almost strikes Ben Hur as it crushes the man he has moved to aid. With a look at the nightmare around him, Ben Hur struggles through the rising water toward the stairs.

FULL SHOT - THE DECK - (BLUE BACKING)

225

It is tilted high, skewered on the ram of the enemy galley. A boarding party of Macedonians swarm over the rail, attacking the Roman marines and sailors. Bloody hand-to-hand fights rage all over the deck. In the background other galleys are locked in combat. Here and there the sea is lit up by a burning ship.

Ben Hur emerges from below, pausing near the hatch.

226 OUT

Version #2

CLOSE SHOT

226X1

He crouches by the hatch, looking around.

226X2 OUT

ANGLE TOWARD AFTER-DECK (BLUE BACKING)

227

Near the rail, Arrius is fighting with two Macedonians, backing up slowly before the unequal odds.

ANGLE TOWARD BEN HUR

228

He sees Arrius. He moves toward the center of the deck, picks up a spear.

ANGLE TOWARD ARRIUS

229

With deft swordsmanship, Arrius disposes of one of his enemies. The second enemy advances, sword raised, but at that moment a spear stabs into him. He falls to the deck. Arrius has time to look off and see Ben Hur before he turns to meet two more Macedonians. Arrius runs his sword through one of them, but the other strikes the Roman a heavy blow, knocking him overboard. The Macedonian turns, seeing Ben Hur coming toward him. Ben Hur seizes a flaming torch from a stanchion, and rams it into the Macedonian's face. With a scream the man falls, writhes in agony.

Suddenly Ben Hur dives overboard.

ANGLE IN WATER

230

Ben Hur lands in water full of debris, smoking embers, broken oars, drowning men. He grabs Arrius underwater, manages to maneuver him onto a piece of wreckage.

ARRIUS' GALLEY

230X1

It is ablaze and starting to list.

EXT. OPEN SEA (BLUE BACKING)

231

Ben Hur has hoisted Arrius onto a fragment of the deck and is maneuvering it away from the battle which can still be seen in the distance. Laboriously Ben Hur pulls himself up on the raft beside the Roman.

Version #2

GALLEY - RAFT IN FOREGROUND - (BLUE BACKING)

231X1

Over Ben Hur and Arrius we see the ship sinking slowly into her grave. Arrius' eyes go to the last plunge of his galley. Then he turns his head away, overcome by the desolation of the moment. He gives a cry:

ARRIUS

We are defeated!

His hand goes to his dagger: he unsheathes it to kill himself. Ben Hur strikes the dagger out of Arrius' hand. Arrius attempts to throw himself into the water. Ben Hur struggles with him, and hits him across the temples with a piece of chain. Arrius falls back on the raft, unconscious.

DISSOLVE TO:

LONG SHOT - EXT. OPEN SEA - EARLY MORNING

232

The raft floats peacefully, with the figures of Arrius and Ben Hur sprawled motionless on it.

CLOSER SHOT - THE RAFT

233

Ben Hur lies face downward, the still figure of Arrius beside him. Arrius is chained to the raft: one end of the chain is twisted round Ben Hur's arm.

Presently the Roman stirs, opens his eyes, struggles to a sitting position. The movement rouses Ben Hur who also sits up. The Roman's eyes go to the chain which binds them together. Ben Hur takes a firmer grip on the chain.

ARRIUS

Why did you save me?

BEN HUR

Why did you have me unchained?

There is a moment without words. Arrius, feeling himself dominated by the slave, looks at him. His tone has changed, as though he appealed from man to man.

ARRIUS

What is your name, Forty-one?

Version #2

BEN HUR
Judah Ben Hur.

233
CONT'D.
(2)

ARRIUS
Judah Ben Hur, let me die.

BEN HUR (part mocking, part com-
passionate, recalling Arrius' own words)
We keep you alive to serve this ship.
Row well, and live!

For the first time there is a flicker of an answering
smile from Arrius.

Suddenly Ben Hur becomes alert, scanning the horizon.

234-235 OUT

WHAT BEN HUR SEES

236

Far off, a mere dot on the horizon, is a ship.

CLOSE SHOT ON RAFT

237

Arrius lifts his head, looking in the direction
in which Ben Hur is staring. Then he looks back
to Ben Hur.

ARRIUS (laboured)
You see a ship. Is the sail square?

BEN HUR
I can't tell.

ARRIUS
Better for us both if it's the enemy:
my death, your freedom.

Ben Hur watches tensely.

BEN HUR
It is a Roman sail.

There is no elation in Arrius, only the relief of a
man who will be rescued from thirst and starvation.

DISSOLVE:

ANGLE ON A ROMAN GALLEY - DECK

238

Arrius is being helped over the rail by sailors who put a blanket around him. Behind the consul, other sailors help Ben Hur aboard.

The whole ship's company is gathered on the foredeck at attention. A trumpet sounds, and the Captain of the Galley comes forward and embraces Arrius.

CAPTAIN

Welcome, consul. We had given up hope of you.

ARRIUS

The battle was lost.

CAPTAIN

You lost ten galleys: but you have the victory. The day of those Macedonian pirates is well over.

ARRIUS (hardly believing it
at first)

It was a victory!

CAPTAIN

Complete. Great joy to the Emperor when he knows he can celebrate your triumph, not mourn your memory.

Water is brought in a pail. The Captain dips the cup in the water and gives it to Arrius, who passes the cup to Ben Hur. He looks at Arrius, and his parched lips smile. Ben Hur drinks. Then he returns the cup to Arrius, who takes it and drinks thirstily. When he has drunk, he looks again at Ben Hur.

ARRIUS

It would seem that in his eagerness to save you, your God has also saved the Roman fleet.

Arrius turns back to the Captain, and, as they move away, Ben Hur follows them with his eyes, as though wondering what future is waiting for him.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PALATINE PALACE - ROME - DAY

239

Framed in one of the great arches, the victory parade honoring Arrius' triumphant homecoming can be seen crossing the vast concourse in front of the palace. It is a martial display of cavalry, marines, foot soldiers with eagles and banners aloft, paced by the MUSIC of FLUTES and TRUMPETS.

CLOSER SHOT - SHOOTING UPWARD FROM A LOW ANGLE

240

Marching steadily, the might of Rome comes right AT THE CAMERA. It is a dazzling display, banks of polished shields, bristling forests of spears, plumed helmets nodding. Suddenly there is a deafening CHEER as two mounted men have appeared. One is Arrius, the other

Ben Hur, splendidly dressed, riding beside the Consul. As Arrius nears the CAMERA, his arm goes out stiffly in a salute. The cheers increase.

240
CONT'D
(2)

LONG SHOT TOWARD PARADE FROM PALACE

241

In the foreground, backs to the CAMERA, stand the EMPEROR TIBERIUS, his aides, members of his household, all wearing purple-bordered togas. The Emperor is returning the salute of Arrius, who can be seen in the distant background riding past. In the farther background, across the concourse, a tremendous crowd of cheering people can be seen. As the Emperor lowers his arm, an aide moves closer to him.

AIDE

Divine Majesty...

The Emperor turns so that his face can be seen in profile. He is an old man, but alert and commanding, with the eyes of an attacking hawk.

AIDE

If you will notice the man riding beside Arrius, he is the one who tried to kill your governor in Judea.

TIBERIUS (surprise)

Did he indeed? He tries to kill a Roman Governor, yet he saves a Roman Consul. Somewhat unpredictable and inconsistent.

The Emperor frowns. He looks back curiously at the parade.

TWO SHOT - ARRIUS AND BEN HUR

242

as they ride, Arrius smiles reassuringly at Ben Hur.

FULL SHOT - THE CONCOURSE

243

The parade continues, apparently without end, and the flute and trumpets sound the victory music.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE SHOT - TIBERIUS
INT. AUDIENCE CHAMBER - DAY

244

The Emperor is seated on a throne under a huge gilded Roman eagle.

TIBERIUS

It has been recorded that Judah Ben Hur was legally convicted of an attack on our Governor at Jerusalem.

WIDER ANGLE

245

The audience chamber is a chaste room of white marble. Flanking the Emperor are senators and advisors, all wearing purple-bordered togas. Arrius, similarly dressed, stands at the foot of the throne.

TIBERIUS (continuing)

An attack upon our Governor is an attack upon the Senate and the people of Rome.

ARRIUS (protestingly)

Divine Emperor, I am convinced that no such attack was intended.

Tiberius' face flushes darkly.

TIBERIUS

Consul, the justice of the Senate and the people of Rome cannot be disputed. He has been convicted. There is no appeal.

ARRIUS

But Divine Emperor --

TIBERIUS (patiently)

Consul, allow us to continue. Allow us to be generous. As a reward to you for your great victory, we shall not invoke the law against this man. But neither shall he be freed. We give him to you, as your slave, to do with him as you like.

(an afterthought)

In Rome, of course. He is never to return to Judea. Such is the will of the Senate and the people of Rome.

Tiberius glances at the dignitaries standing around him. They incline their heads gravely. Such is their will -- of course.

For an instant Arrius hesitates, disappointed. Then he bows.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE CLASSICALLY BEAUTIFUL ATRIUM OF ARRIUS' HOME
IN ROME - DAY

245X1

Ben Hur, in Roman dress, is alone. He walks around the room, touching the marble columns, the carved Roman chairs. Before a statue of a Roman dignitary he stops -- becomes aware that the toga on the statue is like his own. He matches the fold of his toga with that of the statue.

Arrius enters.

ARRIUS

Judah!

(He takes him in with pleasure)

Well: my ancestor looks at you with approval. He sees a Roman.

BEN HUR (smiles)

He sees a Judean in disguise.

ARRIUS

Without you, I should never have known this house again.

BEN HUR

Have you been with the Emperor?

ARRIUS

Yes, he was not unfriendly.

BEN HUR

When will he let me go back?

ARRIUS (after a pause)

Never.

BEN HUR (shocked)

Never go back?

ARRIUS

That was the Emperor's order.

(Pause)

If you do, nothing can come of it except death for you and death for your family.

BEN HUR

Even though you told him I was innocent.

ARRIUS (nods)

Even so. You have to be patient, Judah.

JUDAH

I've been patient too long already.

ARRIUS

By force. Now be patient in wisdom. What will happen -- even if you can ever reach your own land in safety? You put yourself again into the hands of Messala and the Governor. I can do nothing then to help you. And this time they would make sure you would never return. You don't fear death, but what will death accomplish?

BEN HUR

And what will come out of patience?

ARRIUS

I have reason to think that the Emperor means to replace Gratus before another year. That should give you cause for hope.

BEN HUR

Another year!

ARRIUS

Don't throw away years of waiting by destroying yourself now. Give me time to help you. I shall hope that Rome will hold something of good for you: my horses, my chariots; you will meet my friends -- many of whom are agreeable companions. You will meet women --

BEN HUR (smiles)

-- many of whom are agreeable companions.

They laugh.

BEN HUR

At least I can be glad it was your life I saved. No man could repay me with better understanding.

ARRIUS

Thank you, Judah. I'm doing my best to make you think so.

DISSOLVE:

ARRIUS

Rome is a fascinating place. You
will do well in Rome, Judah.

245X1
CONT'D
(2)

Ben Hur looks away, his face somber. Arrius is
aware of his disappointment and pain.

BEN HUR (suddenly smiles)

At least I'm glad it was your life
I saved.

DISSOLVE TO:

PARTY AT ARRIUS' HOUSE - EXT. SUNKEN GARDENS
OUTSIDE ARRIUS' VILLA - NIGHT

246

The villa is a lovely structure of marble columns
fronting on a formal terrace. A broad flight of
stairs leads from the terrace to the sunken gardens
below. The center of the gardens is an expanse of
manicured green. Beyond is a forest of ornamental
fountains which fling sparkling streams of water
high in the air. On the other sides of the sunken
gardens are dark groves of cypress and tamarack,
peopled with gleaming white statuary.

A formal party is in progress. Several hundred
persons are gathered. A troupe of Andalusian girls
are dancing to the music of flutes and strings.
It is a scene of superlative beauty, viewed through
the curtain of mist from the fountains.

ANOTHER ANGLE - SHOOTING FROM THE CENTER OF THE
DANCING TROUPE

247

The girls, lithe, dark-skinned, are seen at close
range, and beyond them, in the background, the
watching Romans. For a while the CAMERA follows
the dancers. The final movement brings them close
to the audience. They pause in front of Ben Hur.
Beside him sits Flavia, tantalizing and beautiful
young aristocrat.

CLOSE SHOT - BEN HUR AND FLAVIA

248

Flavia offers wine cup to Ben Hur. He takes it
but doesn't drink. His eyes are on the dancers.

Flavia takes his hand, holds it to her cheek. Ben
Hur smiles at her.

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CLOSE SHOT - ARRIUS AND PILATE

248X1

Pilate, under a rather cynical over-civilized exterior, has a shrewd, keen mind. They are watching the dancers.

ARRIUS

General Vitruvius brought me these dancers from Numidia.

PILATE

The simplest language of the human mind, the body dancing. It conveys without stating.

ARRIUS

And very subtly, I believe, to the Numidian understanding. A fertility rite.

Pilate glances at Flavia and Ben Hur.

PILATE

The daughter of Vitruvius, isn't it, over there with...

ARRIUS

With Ben Hur. Yes. It is.

PILATE (smiles)

The dance has apparently made its meaning clear.

LONG SHOT

248X2

As the dancers finish their dance they form a tableau. The leading dancer sinks in a graceful bow before Ben Hur. Applause and shouts greet this gesture. After a moment the girls break the tableau and run from the green, disappearing among the trees.

Fanfare. Arrius rises, holding a wreath of gold. The assembly is at attention. Arrius' glance goes toward Ben Hur.

ARRIUS

Not long ago I returned to Rome with a young man who had saved my life. You know him as the finest charioteer in Rome. Five times he has driven my horses to victory. For that, this wreath of gold. I know him as one who stands in the place of my son who died.

People start to cheer, but Arrius holds up his hand for silence.

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CLOSE SHOT - ARRIUS

249 OUT
250 OUT
251

He pauses, looking steadily at Ben Hur.

ARRIUS

I have the love and pride in a son's achievements which I thought I should never have again.

ANGLE TOWARD BEN HUR

252

his eyes on Arrius. He slowly gets to his feet.

ARRIUS VOICE O.S.

Nothing could make stronger the bond between us, but tonight I share it with you all.

FULL SHOT

253

as Arrius continues:

ARRIUS

Young Arrius is now the legal bearer of my name, and the heir to my property.

He holds out his hand to Ben Hur, who crosses the green towards him.

TWO SHOT - ARRIUS AND BEN HUR

254

As Ben Hur comes up, Arrius removes a ring from his finger.

ARRIUS

This ring of my ancestors would have gone to my son. Now it is yours.

Ben Hur takes the ring, looking at Arrius with gratitude and love.

BEN HUR (quietly)

It's a strange destiny that brought me to a new life -- a new home --
(smiling)

-- a new father. It brought me here:
it may take me away.

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CLOSE SHOT - ARRIUS

255

BEN HUR'S VOICE O.S.

But wherever I may be, I shall wear
this ring in gratitude, honour and
affection.

Everyone crowds around Ben Hur to congratulate him.
At this point Pontius Pilate joins the group.

ARRIUS (to Pilate)

I present my son to you: to my old
friend, Pontius Pilate, young Arrius.

PILATE

Young man, before you came to this
city my horses always won.

BEN HUR (smiles)

They're magnificent horses, sir,
extremely swift.

PILATE

But not swift enough to defeat you.
Tell me, you come from Judea, isn't
that so?

BEN HUR

Yes.

PILATE

What I've heard of Judea suggests that
the climate is hard to live in.

BEN HUR (after a moment of
hesitation, with a smile)

For Romans, perhaps.

Arrius gives him a brief penetrating look. More guests
join the group to congratulate Ben Hur. Flavia, who has
joined them, pulls Ben Hur away.

TWO SHOT - ARRIUS AND PILATE

255X1

PILATE (gloomily)

It's a wretched thought.

ARRIUS

What is?

PILATE

Judea. -- I'm to be made Governor.

ARRIUS (surprised)

Of Judea?

PILATE (ironic humor)
I asked for Cyprus. But it seems that
the wilderness needs my particular
talents. The scorpions and holy prophets
can't get on without me. There it is.

255X1
CONT'D
(2)

Arrius hands him a goblet of wine.

ARRIUS
Lay the dust of Judea, at least for
this evening.

PILATE (crinking)
Goats and Jehovah!

256 OUT
257 OUT

INT. SUMMER HOUSE - GARDEN

258

It is a circular columned retreat which commands a
spectacular view of Rome, sprawled far in the distance
below. Ben Hur enters, stands near one of the columns.
The music of the party can be HEARD from the garden.

Arrius enters. For a moment there are no words.

ARRIUS (finally)
You're leaving here.

There is a moment of silence. Ben Hur nods.

BEN HUR
Yes. -- I must.

ARRIUS
It's a journey I can't keep you from.
Your eyes have never left it, all
through these months. I can recognize
pain.

(a slight pause)
Still, my counsel is to wait. Gratus
is to be replaced. The Governorship
goes to Pontius Pilate, he tells me.

BEN HUR
When?

ARRIUS
Before long. It's very much to our
purpose.

BEN HUR
Nothing is to the purpose if, when I
return to Judea, I come too late. That
is the thought which punished me each
moment I spent here.

ARRIUS

I know. Because I knew it, I put the ring of my ancestors on your hand tonight. It gives you my protection from Gratus and Messala, as far as that's possible.

(pause)

Will Rome see you again?

BEN HUR

Here is a part of my life which you have made for me, I shall remember it.

ARRIUS (ironically)

Whoever the gods are, they take small interest in an old man's hopes.

BEN HUR (taking his irony with sympathy).
They have their way.

Arrius leads him away towards the villa,

DISSOLVE

259 OUT

EXT. OPEN SEA - DAY

260

A small two-masted trading vessel runs before a brisk wind. It is a bright day of sun and fleecy clouds,

DISSOLVE TO:

THE DECK OF THE SHIP

261

A group of travelers stand near the rail, staring off at a distant purple horizon. A man points toward it.

MAN

What's the land we see there? Judea?

Next to the man is a tall figure wearing the robe and tarboosh of an Arab. He turns. He is Ben Hur.

BEN HUR

Yes.
(to himself)

Judea

MAN
A barren coast.

261
CONT'D
(2)

BEN HUR
Not to all men. To some, it has
the same life as their own hand.

He looks at his hand -- then off toward the shore.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. JUDEAN DESERT - DAY

262

Across the endless white sands, winding its way
slowly comes a long caravan of several hundred camels.
As it approaches

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. AN OASIS - DAY

263

Palm trees and grass-covered earth mark the edge of
a lake. The caravan is coming to a stop. The
camels are kneeling. Camel boys start watering their
charges; some are replenishing their waterskins at
the lake.

CLOSER SHOT - BEN HUR

264

He dismounts, stands near his kneeling camel. He is drinking from a gourd which his camel boy has brought him. Refreshed, he looks off curiously. Staring at something unseen, he returns the gourd to the camel boy, moves away.

265 OUT
266 OUT

WHAT HE SEES

267

Not far away, standing beside a palm tree, is the robed figure of a white-bearded patriarch. He is much aged, but he can be recognized as Balthasar, one of the Magi. He is peering intently at Ben Hur.

BALTHASAR

You are a stranger here.

ANOTHER ANGLE - INCLUDING BOTH OF THEM

268

Ben Hur says nothing. Balthasar approaches him, still staring with strange intensity.

BEN HUR (guardedly)

Why do you ask?

He looks at Balthasar suspiciously.

BALTHASAR (almost to himself)

He would be about your age.

BEN HUR

Who?

The old man looks at Ben Hur closely, then he stares off into the distance.

BALTHASAR

When I find him, I shall know him...

There is a moment of silence. Then Balthasar's glance returns to Ben Hur.

BALTHASAR

But forgive me. I'm Balthasar of Alexandria. I am the guest of Sheik Ilderim the Generous.

He looks at Ben Hur questioningly.

Ben Hur turns as though about to return to the caravan. A SHOUT is heard. Ben Hur looks around.

268
CONT'D
(2)

BALTHASAR

That is our host
(dryly)
He is not a quiet man.

The shouts continue, high and angry.

EXT. A MEADOW

269

In the meadow an oval race track has been marked out. At the starting pole there are four magnificent milk-white Arab horses harnessed to a chariot. They are plunging and rearing frantically while the driver pulls on the reins, struggling to calm the horses. Near the track, on a bit of high ground, stands the SHEIK ILDERIM, a big, bearded, robust Arab. Around him are some of his tribesmen and his bodyguard, lynx-eyed men of the desert, armed with moon-curved swords.

THE SHEIK (shouting)

Fool! Headless toad! Do you know
nothing of horses?

The driver manages to get the horses calmed a bit. Their nervous plunging subsides.

CLOSER SHOT - THE SHEIK AND HIS FOLLOWERS

270

The sheik, still raging, glares off at the driver.

THE SHEIK (shouting)

Whip my children once, and I drain
every drop of your blood!

While the Sheik admonishes the driver, Balthasar comes up with Ben Hur.

THE SHEIK (furiously)

Now...now! They are ready! Let them run!

LONG SHOT - TOWARD THE MEADOW

271

At the driver's urging, the horses break into a gallop. They go wildly, magnificently.

TWO SHOT - BEN HUR AND BALTHASAR 272

They watch the progress of the horses around the circuit.

BEN HUR

They are beautiful horses.

BALTHASAR

The Sheik means to enter them in the games at Jerusalem.

Ben Hur's glance goes to the horses.

BALTHASAR

For years the Romans have humiliated the desert people. Every tribesman from the Tigris to the sea is praying for victory.

BEN HUR (looking off)

But their prayers aren't going to be answered. The horses are not running as a team. Watch -- they'll break stride on the turn.

LONG SHOT TOWARD THE MEADOW 273

The four white racers fly with breathtaking speed down the back stretch of the track. They plunge into the turn, but instead of taking it close to the rail, they head off at a tangent across the track, falling into confusion, almost upsetting the chariot. The driver begins to whip them. They whinny, frightened.

TWO SHOT - BALTHASAR AND BEN HUR 274

The Sheik's cries of rage can be heard.

THE SHEIK

No, no, not the whip! Fool! Fool!

GROUP SHOT - THE SHEIK AND HIS FOLLOWERS 275

THE SHEIK (screaming)

I'll kill him! With my own hands I'll kill him! Stop him!

LONG SHOT TOWARD MEADOW 276

As the driver continues to whip the horses, Arab stable boys run to the team, seize the bridles, begin to quiet the terrified racers.

GROUP SHOT - THE SHEIK AND HIS FOLLOWERS

277

Glowering off toward the meadow, the Sheik mutters angrily to himself. He notices Balthasar and Ben Hur.

THE SHEIK

I am doomed!

(in despair)

You saw what happened, my friend?

BALTHASAR

This traveler told what would happen before it happened.

The Sheik turns to Ben Hur inquiringly.

BEN HUR

Your horses are very fine, but they are not a team.

The Sheik stares at him.

THE SHEIK (exploding)

Not a team!

He glares at Ben Hur, who gazes back serenely.

BEN HUR

But one of your horses held steady -- the one inside the trace.

THE SHEIK (nodding)

Antares.

BEN HUR

He should run on the outside, where he can steady the others.

THE SHEIK (impressed)

You have a keen eye. How did you acquire it?

BEN HUR (smiles)

By strange choice and stranger fortune.

THE SHEIK (tensely eager)

Tell me, my young friend, could you make my four run as one?

BEN HUR

My caravan just stopped for water. I must rejoin it immediately.

He starts to leave. The Sheik detains him.

THE SHEIK (with great eagerness)

Stay, my friend. Stay here as my honoured guest.

BEN HUR
You are generous. But I have a mission in Jerusalem.

Ben Hur
Chgs.

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103

BALTHASAR

Whatever it is you seek, my friend,
go in God's way and you will find it.

277
CONT'D
(2)

Ben Hur looks into the old man's eyes and is touched by
what he sees. He bows, and turns away.

THE SHEIK

A moment. Am I not to know your name?

BEN HUR (turns back)

If we meet again, you will know it.

The Sheik and Balthasaw watch him go.

DISSOLVE

THE JOPPA GATE - JERUSALEM - LATE AFTERNOON

278

The city gate teems with activity, merchants and hawkers,
travelers coming and going. Some pause and watch as the
great overland caravan enters the city, the many camel bells
ringing a tinkling accompaniment to the animals' majestic
pace. As Ben Hur's camel comes to the f.g., he can be
seen looking at familiar sights.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A JERUSALEM STREET - DUSK

279

Merchants are closing their stalls. The street is alive
with hurrying crowds. Among them is Ben Hur, carrying a
small bundle. He wears his tarboosh with the veil hooked
across the lower part of his face, so that only his eyes
are visible. He moves slowly, looking around with the
air of one long absent. A squad of armed Roman soldiers
under the command of a Decurian swing along the middle
of the narrow street, passing close to Ben Hur. He
glances once with hard eyes at the Romans as he walks.

DISSOLVE TO:

280 OUT

EXT. THE HOUSE OF HUR - NIGHT

281

The angle is UPWARD from the street, emphasizing the
silhouette of the roof parapet, the site of the tragedy
five years ago. For a moment CAMERA holds this stark
outline, then moves DOWN the massive wall of the house
to street level.

A man enters and stands in the shadow of the building,
motionless. CAMERA MOVES CLOSER, revealing it is
Ben Hur. For a moment he stares at his home, then
he starts forward.

PAGES 102-103 OUT

282 OUT

ANGLE TOWARD HOUSE

283

Ben Hur crosses the street to the gate. He stares at the heavy oak panels which still show the scars inflicted on the day they were battered in by the Romans. A large plank has been spiked across the gate, scaling it. Ben Hur looks up and down the deserted street, puts down his bundle, braces himself, pulls the plank loose. Then he opens the little valve door set into one side of the gate. Taking his bundle, he enters, replacing the plank and closing the small door.

EXT. COURTYARD - SHOT TOWARD GATE

284

Ben Hur surveys the place. It is a ruin, the gardens dead, the fountains dry. Weeds grow between the stones of the pavement. He moves toward the house.

285-287
OUT

A WIDER ANGLE

288

Ben Hur crosses to the front door. The Mesusah still hangs over the threshold. Ben Hur reaches out, touches the Mesusah, then kisses his fingers. He pushes the door. With a squeak of rusty hinges, it opens. He steps inside.

INT. COURT

289

Ben Hur enters the darkened house. Everything is as before - tapestries, sculptures, the ivory stool by the door. He puts down his bundle, moves forward, looking around. He pauses, listening. He hears a footstep and steps into the shadows behind a pillar. A glow of light appears at the back of the hall. It is a candle, carried by a shadowy figure. As the light moves forward, Esther's face can be seen, still lovely but infamously sad. Ben Hur is amazed. For a moment he watches her, then he calls out softly.

BEN HUR

Esther!

He steps into view.

CLOSER SHOT TOWARD ESTHER

290

She holds the candle higher, staring. Her eyes are wide with wonder and sheer disbelief.

JUDAH

Esther! It's Judah!

ESTHER (stunned)

Judah!

She stares at him numbly, uncomprehendingly, her hand trembles. He moves to her quickly, takes the candle.

ESTHER

You're alive! You're alive!

BEN HUR

Esther!

(regarding her wonderingly)

You...Why are you here? What has happened?

For an instant she stares at him, then she breaks. She sobs uncontrollably. He holds her to him, lets her cry it out. After a moment he leads her gently to a divan, puts her down on it. He places the candle on a stand, sits beside her, taking her hands in his.

BEN HUR

I'm here with you now...Where is your father, Esther?

ESTHER (slowly)

The day they took you away, they imprisoned him. They tortured him. When they were sure he was hiding nothing, they let him go.
(falteringly)

Ever since then...we've been living here, in this house.

The tears brim over, roll down her cheeks.

BEN HUR

You never went back to Antioch?

ESTHER (tonelessly)

No. The Romans took everything. There was nothing left for us there.

BEN HUR

Esther, where are my mother and sister?

SIMONIDES' VOICE
(interrupting before she can answer)
Esther! Esther!

290
CONT'D
(2)

She turns sharply. There is a moment of silence, as she struggles for composure.

ESTHER (in a low voice)
Let me tell him first!

Ben Hur nods. She smiles at him tremulously, then rises, takes the candle. He moves to the door of the living room. She crosses to the stairs, leaving him in darkness.

ANOTHER ANGLE - AT STAIRS

291

Esther comes to the foot of the stairs, where she stops.

ESTHER (calling)
I am here, father.

She holds the candle high, waiting. A figure appears above her on the stairs. It is a sturdy giant of a man, and held in his arms, as lightly as a baby, is Simonides. The old man is greatly aged, his eyes deeply sunken, his face drawn from pain. His body, covered by a robe, seems shrunken. Carefully the giant carries Simonides down the stairs. Esther, lighting the way, leads them down the hall to the back of the house.

CLOSE SHOT - BEN HUR

292

He stands in the dark watching, shocked by the terrible change in Simonides. As the light grows dimmer, Ben Hur moves down the hall, following them.

INT. SCULLERY

293

It is a great smoke-stained room. On one side is an open fireplace with pot hooks for cooking. There is a large clay oven, some jugs of water, a rough table and several benches, an arm chair. Esther puts the candle on the table where there is a meager meal spread out. The giant follows her into the room, places Simonides in the arm chair, tucks the robe about him.

ESTHER (emotionally)
Father, something wonderful has happened!
(hesitantly)
Father, Judah Ben Hur is alive! He's
come home....He's here.

For an instant he stares at her in amazement. Then slowly his glance goes toward the door.

293
CONT'D
(2)

ANGLE - INCLUDING BEN HUR

294

standing in the doorway. In awe, Simonides looks at him.

SIMONIDES (gasping)

Judah...

Mutely he holds out his hands. Ben Hur comes forward, takes them.

SIMONIDES

I cannot rise to greet you, but my heart greets you.

BEN HUR (very moved)

My dear old friend.

He bends over and embraces him. With a strong grip Simonides holds him at arms' length.

SIMONIDES (with fierce joy)

Let me look at you! Let me see you! Yes, yes...it is true. Praise God for his mercy.

BEN HUR (with an increased feeling of foreboding)

Where are my mother and sister?

Simonides pauses, lowers his head for a moment. Then looking up to Ben Hur he speaks gently.

SIMONIDES

Since that day there has been no word of them.

Simonides and Esther look at him with deep sympathy. A moment of silence.

BEN HUR

Is Messala still in Jerusalem?

SIMONIDES

Yes.

Ben Hur's jaw hardens. His glance takes in the old man's shrunken figure.

BEN HUR (softly)

I wish that you had been less loyal.

SIMONIDES

Do not pity me, Master Judah.
(smiles at him)

In fact, I am twice the man I was.
(he points at the giant who stands
in the shadows across the room)

There is Malluch, my other half. We met
in the dungeons of the citadel. We were
released on the same day -- Malluch with-
out a tongue, and I without legs. Since
then I have been his tongue and he has
been my legs. Together we make a con-
siderable man!

BEN HUR (much moved)

Old friend....!

He embraces the old man. Esther's eyes never leave Ben Hur.

SIMONIDES (brokenly)

There has been only misery for five
long years...till now.
(indicates Esther)

She always said you would return. She
never gave up hope.

ESTHER (almost a whisper)

Though I hoped it, I didn't believe it.

SIMONIDES

God saved him...But how?

BEN HUR

The galley I was in was sunk. I
saved the life of Arrius, a Roman
consul. He saved mine.

SIMONIDES

Ah, but it was not the hand of the
Roman which saved you...It was the hand
of our God.

BEN HUR (smiles at him)

Should I not honor the hand chosen by our God?

ESTHER

And you lived at Rome?

BEN HUR (nods)

As the Consul's son.

SIMONIDES

You feel gratitude to him, of course, but....

BEN HUR (nods)
But my inner loyalty is the same
as yours. Arrius understands that.

294
CONT'D
(2)

SIMONIDES (with a shrewd
look at Ben Hur)
Even if you were to strike at the Emperor?

Ben Hur gives him a sharp look.

BEN HUR
What do you mean?

SIMONIDES
I see that your one thought is to find
your mother and sister. But suppose
that isn't possible. If one purpose
fails, it is good to have another. And
that purpose could be the liberation of
your people.

BEN HUR
I haven't yet failed in my first purpose.

SIMONIDES (very tense - the
practical propagandist)
All over our nation people are banding
together. All the desert people who
have reason to hate Rome are gathering
into an invisible army. Soon they will
strike at Rome.

Simonides' violence takes Ben Hur by surprise.

BEN HUR
And you are part of this?

SIMONIDES
With all the life that is left me --
Most of your fortune is safe, Judah.
They couldn't make me tell them where
it is. Use it, as I would, to buy
death for the Romans: and we can be
free of persecution for all time to
come.

ESTHER (on an impulse)
Are you sure of that?

SIMONIDES
Judah --

BEN HUR (a pause)
No, Simonides. That is not why I
came back.

Ben Hur
Chgs.

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SIMONIDES

Judah, they are dead! Five years --
five years! No one could live so long
in the dungeons. I know! I was in
them.

294
CONT'D
(3)

BEN HUR

Who lives more than one year in the
galleys?

SIMONIDES

Why yes, it's true. You've come back
to us like a returning faith. Oh
Judah, I should like to laugh again.

BEN HUR (smiles)

Yes, Simonides.

SIMONIDES

Let us laugh again.

BEN HUR

We will laugh.

SIMONIDES

There will be joy again in this
house. We shall celebrate tonight --
among the dust and cobwebs.

Malluch moves to take up Simonides, but Ben Hur
intervenes.

BEN HUR

I will take him.

He picks Simonides up in his arms and carries him to
the inner room.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

295

Esther and Ben Hur at the parapet. He has changed
into a tunic and robe.

BEN HUR

We stood here before.

ESTHER

A long while ago.

BEN HUR
Only five years.

ESTHER
But now it seems as though we had
never moved from this place...
almost as though, five minutes ago --

BEN HUR
--I was saying: 'If you were not a
bride, I should kiss you goodbye.'

ESTHER
'If I were not a bride, there would
be no goodbyes to be said.' --I am
not a bride.

BEN HUR
Why didn't you marry?

ESTHER
My father needed me. And also -- when
you were taken away --

She cannot finish. She is close to ears. She composes
herself.

ESTHER
We won't think of that time.

She is quiet. He holds up the finger which wears the
ring, suddenly serious.

BEN HUR
I said I should wear this ring until I
met a woman I would marry. It is still
here on my finger.

ESTHER
As soon as I saw you, I blessed it, as
though it had kept you safe.

BEN HUR
It has become a part of my hand.

For a moment they are caught by their emotions. Then
suddenly the happiness goes from Esther's face.

ESTHER (intensely)
If Messala once knew you were here...

BEN HUR
As he must. I shall have to face Messala.
He will know where they are.

ESTHER
And if you should find -- if he should
tell you they're dead...

BEN HUR
Then Messala will be made to wish
they were living.

295
CONT'D
(3)

ESTHER (intensely)
I've seen too much of what hate can do.
My father and Malluch are burnt up with
it. But I have heard of a young rabbi
who says that forgiveness is greater,
and love more powerful than hatred. I
believe it.

(fiercely)
Judah, stay alive. Keep away from Messala!

BEN HUR
Only if I can give up thinking and feeling.
And that time hasn't yet come.

ESTHER (her pent-up feelings
leaping out at him)
What will happen to you -- to you, to
all of us? It would have been a thousand
times better if you had stayed in Rome.

She turns swiftly and goes. Ben Hur moves after her,
then stops. He stands looking after her.

296 OUT

INT. A ROOM IN MESSALA'S VILLA - DAY

297

It is a luxurious and lavishly furnished room. Mes-
sala stands at a window, staring out. Drusus lounges
nearby, sipping wine. Both wear togas.

A servant enters, crosses to Messala and presents him
with an ornate box.

SERVANT
For the Tribune, with the compliments
of Quintus Arrius. He waits your
pleasure.

MESSALA (surprised)
The Consul -- here?

SERVANT
No sir, his son.

MESSALA
Thank him. And bring him to me.

The servant departs. Messala crosses to a marble
counter and puts down the box.

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MESSALA

I've heard of young Arrius. He is
the champion of the Great Circus.

(a pause)

But why is he here, presenting me
with gifts?

297
CONT'D
(2)

He opens the box and takes out a gleaming dagger, its
handle crusted with jewels. Drusus comes over and
looks at it.

DRUSUS

It's beautiful.

MESSALA

And from a man I've never met.

BEN HUR'S VOICE

You are wrong, Messala.

Messala and Drusus turn.

AN ANGLE REVEALING BEN HUR

298

standing in the doorway, wearing a purple-bordered
toga. Messala and Drusus are astounded.

MESSALA

Judah! By the Gods!

Ben Hur moves toward them. Messala and Drusus continue
to stare at him.

MESSALA

By what magic do you bear the name
of a Consul of Rome?

BEN HUR

You were the magician, Messala.
You condemned me to the galleys.

(evenly)

When my ship was sunk, I saved the
consul's life.

(removing Arrius' ring)

You know his seal.

He steps over to the counter, presses the ring hard against
a wax tablet which lies there. Messala doesn't bother to
look at the impression. His glance never leaves Ben Hur.

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BEN HUR

And now I've come back: as with every stroke of that oar I was chained to, I swore I would.

298
CONT'D
(2)

Their eyes hold for an instant, challengingly.

MESSALA

Your gift is appropriate, young Arrius.
(looking at the dagger)
Do you suggest I use it on myself?
(he looks up at Ben Hur)
or do you expect something in return?

BEN HUR

Yes: my mother and my sister.

MESSALA

It is not in my power.

BEN HUR (carefully)

If you free them, I will forget the pledge I made with every stroke of my oar. Restore them to me and...
(indicating the dagger)
keep that as a token of my forgiveness.

MESSALA

I am not the Governor of Judea. I can do nothing without Gratus' approval.

BEN HUR

I will come back tomorrow.
(softly)
Don't disappoint me, Messala.

He leaves the room. Messala and Drusus look after him.

MESSALA (troubled)

What became of them?

DRUSUS

It has been over five years. I suppose they are dead.

MESSALA (frowning)

Go to the citadel, Drusus. Find out.

Drusus looks at him penetratingly.

DRUSUS

Messala...

He pauses. Messala meets his glance.

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DRUSUS

You are not afraid of this man,
are you?

298
CONT'D
(3)

MESSALA

No. But a Jew who survives in a
Roman world is a remarkable being.

Drusus continues to look at him for a moment, then turns
and strides out. Messala is alone, disturbed, thoughtful.
He moves over to the counter, replacing the dagger in the
box.

DISSOLVE TO:

299 OUT

INT. A SUBTERRANEAN CORRIDOR

300

There is no day down here, and flaming torches light
the way for the men who are advancing along the narrow
stone passage. In the lead are two armed soldiers
holding the torches. Following them is a jailer. Then
Drusus. CAMERA MOVES WITH THEM as they walk, then descend
six stairs. Now the passage becomes lower. They move
forward and descend another half dozen stairs.

INT. OUTER DUNGEONS

301

This is a circular chamber, with bolted iron reinforced
doors every few feet around a stone wall which oozes
with moisture. A guard, holding his torch high, leads
the way to a door, and stops. The jailer begins to
fumble with his keys. Drusus waits nervously.

DRUSUS

How long since you've seen them?

JAILER

Never. And I've been here three
years. But they're alive all right.
The food disappears.

He indicates a little trap door in the larger door, near
the floor. He tries a key in the lock, without success.
Then he tries another. It works. He pushes the door
open. He takes the torch from the soldier, thrusts it
through the door and looks into the cell. With a gasp
of horror he draws back.

JAILER

Lepers!

Drusus stares at him. Then he takes the torch and looks
into the cell himself.

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WHAT HE SEES

302

Cowering in the shadows at the back of the cell are two figures in rags. Their arms, legs, faces are decayed and disfigured. Miriam and Tirzah blink in the unaccustomed light.

OUTER DUNGEON

303

Drusus draws back in revulsion.

DRUSUS

Close the door!

The jailer pulls the door shut with a clang, locks it.

QUAESTOR (to jailer)

Take them outside the city. Release them. Then burn out the cell!

(to Drusus)

I will inform the Governor we acted the moment the infection was discovered.

DRUSUS (stunned)

Yes... yes...

He starts away. The others follow.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TEMPLE - AN INNER COURT - DUSK

304

It is filled with devout people chanting the evening prayer. Ben Hur stands near one of the porticos. He looks upward beseechingly, as he sends a prayer to the God of his fathers.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE COURT OF THE HOUSE OF HUR - NIGHT

305,306
OUT
306X1

Esther sits alone. After a while she rises, looks to the gate, as if expecting someone. Suddenly she is aware of a movement behind the shrubbery.

IN THE SHRUBBERY

306X2

There is a slight movement of the leaves, which Esther sees.

ESTHER

Is someone there?

No answer.

ESTHER
There is someone there. Who are you?

306X2
CONT'D
(2)

She moves toward the bushes.

MIRIAM'S VOICE
Don't come any closer!

ESTHER (reacting)
Who are you?

MIRIAM'S VOICE
Don't touch us! Esther, it's Miriam!
Don't come near us!

ESTHER (overcome)
Miriam! Miriam!

MIRIAM'S VOICE
Stay where you are!

ESTHER (going forward,
crying with joy)
You have come home! Thank God!
Thank God!

She pushes the foliage aside, revealing Miriam and
Tirzah.

TIRZAH
Stand back Esther ...

307-308
OUT

CLOSE SHOT

309

MIRIAM
What of Judah? Is he alive?

ESTHER
He is alive. He is here.

MIRIAM (joyfully)
Where? Where is he?

ESTHER
He is searching for you now.
(breathlessly)
I must find him -- tell him -- and
tell my father.

MIRIAM
No, Esther -- tell no one.

309
CONT'D
(2)

ESTHER (suddenly
stricken with fear)
But why?

MIRIAM
We are lepers.

Esther comes closer to them, sees now that this is true. The horror of the realization shows in her face. She starts toward them.

TIRZAH
Oh, Esther.

MIRIAM
We are going away. To the Valley
of the Lepers. We won't return.

ESTHER
But Judah has to be told. If I let
you go he will never forgive me.

MIRIAM
He must never know that you saw us.

At a SOUND from the gate, Miriam and Tirzah retreat into the foliage. Esther moves as though towards the gate. Miriam whispers one more appeal to her and Esther moves back into a doorway.

310-311
OUT

THE COURT - ANOTHER ANGLE

311X1

Ben Hur comes in from the street and opens the house door, closing it behind him.

CLOSE SHOT

311AX1

After Ben Hur has gone, Miriam and Tirzah reappear, their eyes filled with tears. They stand staring at the door.

MIRIAM
I couldn't see his face. Is he changed?

ESTHER
No: he is not changed: he is - not
changed.

MIRIAM
You love him, Esther. Promise me,
on your love for him, you will never
tell him you have seen us.

311AX1
CONT'D
(2)

TIRZAH
Is he never to know?

MIRIAM
Let him remember us as we were. There's
nothing else I can hope for, only this.

ESTHER (with difficulty)
I promise you.

MIRIAM (moving away with Tirzah)
I'm content.

TIRZAH
Must we go yet?

Miriam draws her away.

ESTHER (in great distress)
Oh, Miriam, wait!

Miriam turns and shakes her head, and moves on.

ESTHER
Wait!

Miriam and Tirzah disappear into the darkness.

NIGHT - INT. HOUSE
BEN HUR AND SIMONIDES

311AX2

Esther comes into the room. She stands listening,
unseen by them.

BEN HUR
Messala will find out. I'm sure of that.

SIMONIDES
I pray to God they are alive, and that
Messala will free them.

BEN HUR (with deadly insistence)
He'll free them. He wants to survive.

Esther moves into the room. Ben Hur and Simonides turn
in surprise.

Ben Hur
Chgs.

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ESTHER
He can't free them, Judah.

311AX2
CONT'D
(1)

BEN HUR
What do you mean?

ESTHER
I saw them, Judah.

BEN HUR (going to her
desperately)
Where? When did you see them?

ESTHER (distressed)
Judah, they were dead... they were
dead.

Ben Hur stares into her eyes, horrified. Simonides
is shocked, bewildered.

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BEN HUR (his voice flat,
bewildered)
When, Esther?
(he shakes her by the shoulders,
hardly knowing what he is doing)
When? When?

311AX2
CONT'D
(2)

ESTHER (with difficulty)
In the prison. When I was waiting for
news of my father.

BEN HUR
Why didn't you tell me this?

ESTHER (tears, taking control)
I couldn't tell you...nor even tell you,
father. I was afraid if you saw Messala --
Oh Judah, you've come to the end of your
search. It's over now.

BEN HUR (scarcely knowing that
he speaks)
Over?

He turns away.

ESTHER
Judah...!

Ben Hur turns back to them, his eyes blazing.

BEN HUR (stronger)
Over?

ESTHER (desperate)
Forget, forget, forget Messala. Go
back to Rome.

Ben Hur abruptly leaves the room. Simonides stares
at Esther.

SIMONIDES
You did not see them.

Esther rushes to her father.

ESTHER (sobbing)
I did see them, father. They were here.
Not dead, but...

SIMONIDES (startled)
You saw them here? When?

ESTHER
In the garden, a few minutes ago.

SIMONIDES

In the garden? Where are they now?

311AX2
CONT'D
(3)

She buries her head on his shoulder, sobbing wildly.

311X3
OUT

THE MAIN COURT

311X4

Ben Hur paces for a moment. CAMERA HOLDS on him as he makes a decision. He turns to leave. At the door his hand goes out automatically to touch the Mesusah. He stops. Abruptly he seizes the Mesusah, pulls it out, throws it against the wall. He closes the door, exits toward the gate.

Esther appears after a moment, stands staring into the darkness.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SHEIK'S ENCAMPMENT - ORCHARD OF PALMS - DAY

312

In a clearing, veiled women can be seen working, carrying water, etc. A few of the Sheik's armed warriors are on guard. They turn to meet a solitary horseman,

CLOSE SHOT - BEN HUR

312X1

as he dismounts. The warriors surround him, look at him suspiciously. He looks at their expressionless faces, then around the clearing.

312X2 OUT
312X3 OUT

EXT. SHEIK'S TENT

313

The Sheik comes to the open entrance of the tent. He stares out curiously at the new arrival and strides forward to meet him. As he comes closer to group, he waves the warriors away. He does not yet recognize Ben Hur.

SHEIK (warily)

Stranger, you're welcome here:
shelter or food, what help can we
give you?

BEN HUR (smiles)

Sheik Ilderim, do they run more
to your liking, do they make a team?

Ben Hur
Chgs.

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SHEIK (delighted)
My friend, ah! My slow eyes not to
recognize you: great judge of horses!
...You bring joy to my heart!
(embracing Ben Hur)
Welcome...welcome.

313
CONT'D
(2)

BEN HUR
I'm grateful for your welcome.

SHEIK
You said, if you came back, we should
know your name.

BEN HUR
I am Judah Ben Hur.

SHEIK
Who looked at my horses with the per-
ception of a champion, but where you
learned it, you haven't told me.

BEN HUR
In the Great Circus of Rome.

SHEIK
In the Great Circus! Judah, my friend,
this morning I took my racers to the
meadow. There was gold in the air --
there were diamonds in the grass.
I told myself: the day is good. And
now you are here.

BEN HUR (earnestly)
I've come to ask a great favor of you.

SHEIK
Whatever you wish.

BEN HUR
In Jerusalem, two people who are very
dear to me, my steward and his daughter,
may soon be in danger. They need a place
of safety.

SHEIK (cutting in)
Bring them to me. They will be honoured
guests.

Ben Hur smiles gratefully, takes the Sheik by the arm.

BEN HUR
But Sheik, I must warn you. Whoever
befriends me runs a great risk.
(after a moment's hesitation)
I'm going to kill a man -- a Roman
tribune.

313
CONT'D
(3)

The Sheik stares at him.

SHEIK (thoughtfully)
A Roman tribune. I see. Then if it is
a Roman you will kill, you are twice
welcome. Not only you, but your friends,
your wives...

BEN HUR
I have no wives.

SHEIK (astonished)
No wives at all?

BEN HUR
No, not even one.

SHEIK
I have six wives.
(catching himself)
No, seven. But that is because I'm
travelling. At home I have more.

Ben Hur smiles.

313
CONT'D

BEN HUR (taking leave)
Happy for me that I have found
you, Sheik Ilderim the Generous,
whose generosity will give safety
to my friends.

SHEIK (checking him)
Happy for me that you are here.
Stay tonight. I need to talk
about my horses, and the man who
is to drive them. Let us eat and
drink.

(the Sheik sees a hesitation
in Ben Hur, and takes him by
the arm)
You shall go on your way tomorrow.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE SHEIK'S TENT - INT - NIGHT

314

It is after dinner. Arab men are removing dishes
and trays. There is a low table in the middle of
the tent, surrounded by rugs and cushions. The
Sheik, Balthasar and Ben Hur sit about on cushions.

THE SHEIK
...and Balthasar, I will tell you
something you will not believe. Our
friend here hasn't even got one wife.

The Sheik shakes with laughter.

BALTHASAR (lifts his glass
to Ben Hur)
It's good you have returned.

BEN HUR
I'm glad to see you again, Balthasar.

BALTHASAR (scanning Ben
Hur's face)
But your face reveals that you have
not found peace, my friend.

BEN HUR
No, I have not found it.

BALTHASAR
Nor ever will in the world, but only
in the spirit: there it waits for you.

THE SHEIK

The world of the spirit means everything to Balthasar. I believe in what I can see, feel, taste and touch.

314
CONT'D

Balthasar smiles.

THE SHEIK

But now I must say goodnight to my stars.

He claps his hands together sharply, twice. A man servant comes quickly into the tent.

THE SHEIK

Bring me my beauties.

The man crosses to a curtain at the back and draws it, revealing that this side of the tent is occupied by the four white horses. They stand there, their coats shining, their delicate ears alert, their eyes on the Sheik.

THE SHEIK

Come, my children, come...

One of the horses takes a tentative step forward, then hesitates. The Sheik smiles at Ben Hur.

THE SHEIK

Strangers make them shy.
(to the horses)

Come, come... do not be afraid.

The horses move forward gingerly.

THE SHEIK (to Ben Hur)

They are descended from the racers of the first Pharoahs, and I have named them for the stars.

(calling)
Aldebaran!

A horse advances, putting his nose against the Sheik's cheek.

THE SHEIK

Good Aldebaran, you are the swiftest.

Ben Hur holds out his hand.

BEN HUR

Come, Aldebaran...

The horse hesitates for only an instant, then steps over and allows Ben Hur to pat his nose. The Sheik laughs with pleasure.

314
CONT'D

THE SHEIK

He likes you. Good! Now, Rigel...
Atair!

Two other horses come forward, and the Sheik caresses them. The fourth horse neighs.

THE SHEIK

And you, Antares, I love you too.
I haven't forgotten you. Come.

The fourth horse, broader faced than the others, approaches timidly. The Sheik pats him.

THE SHEIK

You are the slowest, but you can run
all day without tiring. Steady Antares.

Balthasar, too, gives the horses an affectionate pat as they pass.

BEN HUR

I have never seen finer horses...
even at Rome.

THE SHEIK

You should see Mira, their mother.
I did not bring her, for my people
could not bear her absence.

Ben Hur holds out his hand to the horses. The four gather round him, nickering when he pats them. The Sheik chuckles with approval.

THE SHEIK

You are their friend, and they do not
give their affections readily.
(to the horses)
Antares, Rigel, it is late! Atair,
Aldebaran, go and sleep. You must be
strong, swift... Go, my children!

Obediently the horses return to their apartment, and the man servant draws the curtains behind them.

THE SHEIK

When they race at Jerusalem, they will
challenge the finest teams in the
world -- not to mention the champion
of the East, the Tribune Messala, with
his black devils.

BEN HUR (startled)
Messala -- in the Circus?

314
CONT'D

THE SHEIK

Yes.
(staring at him intently)
You know him?

BEN HUR

He is the man I spoke of.

Their eyes hold for an instant.

THE SHEIK (tensely)

Judah Ben Hur, my people are praying
for a man who can drive their team
to victory over Messala.

(he pauses, regarding Ben Hur
earnestly)

You could be that man!

(leaning close to him)

The way to destroy him is to break
his pride, to humiliate him. To a
Roman, that is more bitter than death.

BEN HUR

I must deal with Messala in my own way.

BALTHASAR

Your way is to kill him.

Their eyes go toward the old man.

BALTHASAR

I have seen this terrible thing in
your eyes, Judah Ben Hur. But no matter
what Messala has done to you, you have
no right to take his life. He will be
punished inevitably.

BEN HUR

I don't believe in miracles.

BALTHASAR (gently)

All life is a miracle. Why will you
not accept God's judgment?

BEN HUR

I intend to deal with Messala in
this world -- not the next.

Balthasar smiles.

BALTHASAR

You do not believe in miracles. Yet God once spoke to me out of the darkness: and a star led me to Bethlehem where I found a new-born Child in a manger. And God lived in this Child.

(excitedly)

By now He must be ready to begin His work. That is why I have returned here, so that I may be at hand when He comes among us.

314
CONT'D

He rises, moves over to the entrance.

315 OUT

CLOSE SHOT - BALTHASAR

316

He stares out into the night. He seems to be looking at something ineffably beautiful and wonderful.

BALTHASAR (reverently)

He is near. He saw the sun set this evening as we did. Perhaps He is standing in a doorway, somewhere, or on a hill-top. Perhaps He is a shepherd, a merchant, a fisherman.. But He lives: all our lives from now on will carry His mark.

He pauses; then, like one waking from a dream, turns back to the others.

GROUP SHOT

317

BALTHASAR (gently)

There are many paths to God. I hope yours won't be too difficult.

(pause)

The night is dark. I'm ready to sleep.

He bows to them and exits. The Sheik and Ben Hur rise.

THE SHEIK

Balthasar is a good man, but you must not let what he says deflect you.

Ben Hur regards the Sheik with a faint smile.

BEN HUR (evenly)

It won't.

THE SHEIK

Soon we will strike at Rome...
and Messala. Remember, Judah:
death means nothing to a Roman.
But they dread disgrace and
humiliation.

317
CONT'D
(2)

Ben Hur is silent, thoughtful.

THE SHEIK

Fill your sleep with it: wake and
embrace it. Goodnight.

Ben Hur exits. The Sheik watches him go.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE ROMAN BATH

PAGES 131 and 132 OUT

317X1 - 317X2
OUT

PORTICO OF A ROMAN BATH - DAY

318

Beyond the columns of the portico in the background is a lush orchard. The bathing pool is of marble. Gaming tables and massage cubicles are scattered about. There are some fifty or sixty Roman officers and officials present, some in the pool, some at gaming tables.

Messala is stretched out on a rubbing table, being worked over by a stocky man with a shaved head. Drusus is nearby on another table.

CLOSE SHOT TOWARD ENTRY

319

The Sheik, followed by several attendants with large coffers, enters. There is a sudden silence as the Romans stare at the newcomer in surprise and some hostility.

THE SHEIK

Gentlemen, officers, defenders of
great Rome's Imperium, may I enter?

There is another silence. Then Messala sits up.

MESSALA

Certainly, Sheik.

(dryly)

You do us unexpected honor.

THE SHEIK (blandly)

The noble Tribune is gracious.

The Sheik pauses, looking around with a smile, as if unaware of the antagonism of the officers.

319
CONT'D
(2)

THE SHEIK

And now the question you are all asking yourselves. Why am I here? I can see that beneath the obvious pleasure on your faces...

(looks about at the stoney Roman faces)
Why has Sheik Ilderim the Generous come to Jerusalem, to the house of a great Roman Tribune?

(bows to Messala)
Is it simply to delight in civilized discourse? Alas, the truth is more interesting. It has to do with money.

A murmur of interest from the Romans. Messala has been watching the Sheik with an expressionless face.

THE SHEIK

I see you are disappointed. Nevertheless, I am a coarse gambling man, as you know. The Games approach. I am racing my whites against the noble Tribune's black team.
(The Sheik indicates the coffers.)

I will back my own poor horses.

He motions forward the attendants who bring and open the coffers, revealing gold coins, jewels, etc. An excited murmur.

ROMANS

Any and all?
No limits?
Mark me first, Sheik
And me!
What odds?

THE SHEIK

A moment please, my lord protectors of the far-flung marshes. May I first sit down?

MARIUS (impatiently)
Sit down, lie down. How much will you bet?

SPINTHO (calling)
A seat for the Arab.

METELLUS

We'll see how rich his blood is!

CLOSE SHOT - MESSALA

320

He regards the Sheik curiously.

VOICES OF ROMANS

A thousand dinarii!

Two thousand on Messala!

Mark me, Sheik, I spoke first!

GROUP SHOT - SHEIK AND ROMANS

321

An attendant brings forward a small bench, and the Romans nearly push the Sheik down on it, crowding around him. He produces a tablet and stylus from under the folds of his robe.

SHEIK (briskly)

First, gentlemen, the odds. The Tribune has won many times. The odds should be in the same measure.

(lifting the stylus)

Now what is your pleasure, noble Romans?

MARRIUS

Two to one.

The Sheik looks at him in surprise, holding the stylus poised over the tablet.

Several others chime in, offering three to one. The Sheik regards them pityingly.

THE SHEIK

Noble Romans, men of the Tiber and glory of the earth! Where is the courage, the daring that made Rome master of the world?

(deprecatingly)

I can get better odds on any street market.

MARIUS (cutting in)

Four to one!

The Sheik smiles pleasantly at the young officer.

THE SHEIK (graciously)

Let us not haggle. Let us be fair.

In five years the Tribune has won five victories in the Circus. In all truth...

DRUSUS' VOICE

Just a moment --- Arab!

321
CONT'D
(2)

The officers look around. Drusus, who has been standing behind the others, moves through the group to the Sheik.

DRUSUS (suspiciously)

We know you have a fast team, but who drives your team?

THE SHEIK (after a slight pause)

Oh -- did I not tell you? The Prince of Hur, Judah Ben Hur.

The Romans are amazed.

CLOSE SHOT - MESSALA

322

Staring as the startled exclamations of the Romans are heard.

SPINTHO'S VOICE

The Prince of Hur!

METELLUS' VOICE

He was sent to the galleys years ago.

GROUP SHOT - THE SHEIK AND THE ROMANS

323

The Sheik holds up his hands to quiet the Romans. Drusus looks toward Messala.

THE SHEIK (simply)

He has returned. Your Divine Tiberius was merciful, as always.

A startled murmur comes from the Romans.

THE SHEIK (looking around the circle of faces)

Will no one back the noble Tribune against a Jew, a galley slave?

(He waits, but there is silence.

Then he looks across the room)

You, Tribune... will you give me five to one?

All eyes go toward Messala. There is silence. Then Messala walks across the room and stops directly in front of the Sheik.

MESSALA (firmly)
Five to one.

323
CONT'D
(2)

ROMANS
Bravo!
Well spoken, Messala.
Good, Messala.

MESSALA (grimly)
Five to one, Sheik. The difference
between a Roman and a Jew!

THE SHEIK
Bravely spoken, noble Tribune. We will
now settle the amount of our wager.
I will venture --

He writes on the tablet, holds it up for Messala to
read.

MESSALA
Twenty talents!

A gasp from the Romans. Messala stares at the Sheik.

MESSALA
Twenty talents!

THE SHEIK
Yes. Twenty talents.

Their eyes hold for an instant. The Romans watch
Messala breathlessly, wondering if he will dare to
make the bet. He hesitates. The Sheik smiles, and
the smile is like a slap across Messala's face.

THE SHEIK
Of course, if it is too much...

MESSALA (tightly)
Twenty talents it will be.

THE SHEIK
Agreed.

He offers the stylus. Messala takes it, signs the
tablet, walks away.

MARIUS
I'll give you five to one, for a
thousand dinarii.

The others crowd forward, offering bets.

ROMANS

Two thousand.
Three thousand!
Four!

323
CONT'D
(3)

AN ANGLE FOLLOWING MESSALA

324

A servant enters, steps up to Messala and whispers to him. He crosses the room and walks away. Drusus, troubled, looks after him.

A ROOM IN MESSALA'S VILLA

324A1

Messala enters. He pauses as he sees Iras standing to one side. She is veiled. Messala watches Iras for a moment, silently. Then he comes closer to her.

MESSALA

Well, what do you want?

IRAS

To save a man's life.

MESSALA

Whose life?

IRAS

Are you the Tribune Messala?

MESSALA

Yes.

IRAS

Then it's your own.

MESSALA (smiles, studying her)

Who are you?

IRAS

Sheik Ilderim's daughter.

Messala's interest is caught.

MESSALA

What are you here to tell me?

IRAS

You drive in this race against a man who will try to kill you.

MESSALA

Who told you this?

IRAS (after a fraction's
pause, her eyes hard)
Judah Ben Hur.

324A1
CONT'D
(2)

Messala is silent, looking down. Then his eyes go
back to Iras.

MESSALA
Why should you come to warn me?

IRAS
I have told you.

MESSALA
And you give no reason.

IRAS (after a pause)
My father will be waiting. I must go
to him.

MESSALA
Does he know that you're here?

IRAS (turning in the doorway,
with a faint smile)
I have been walking in your garden.

She slips away toward the garden. Messala stands
looking at the door through which she had gone.

LONG SHOT - EXTERIOR SHEIK'S ENCAMPMENT - DAY

324X1

In the foreground are the Sheik and his tribesmen.
Running smoothly around the improvised track are
the Sheik's four whites, Ben Hur driving.

The team completes a circle of the track, comes to a stop in front of the tent. Ben Hur leaps to the ground, throws the reins to the handlers. He goes to the horses' heads, gives each an affectionate pat.

324X1
CONT'D
(2)

BEN HUR (to handlers)
Treat them well, for they have earned it today.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TENT - ORCHARD OF PALMS - EVENING

325

This is the horses' quarters within the Sheik's tent. The horses are in stalls. Stable boys finish rubbing down the four whites, gather up their brushes and combs and go out as Ben Hur appears. All four horses neigh with pleasure. He stands there, smiling at them.

BEN HUR
You are good fellows... If only men were as good...

Walking over to them, stopping near the first horse, he feeds him a lump of date sugar.

BEN HUR (continuing)
Remember, Atair... Nine times around the Circus... Rigel, do you hear that? Nine lives to live...

(going to the third horse, giving him his treat)

And you, Aldebaran, my swift fellow, you must not win the race the first time around. You win the last time around.

(turning to the fourth horse, giving him sugar)
Steady, Antares... like a rock. You will be our anchor.

Affectionately he takes Antares by both jowls, looks at him. There is a moment of silence. Then, becoming aware of another presence, Ben Hur turns and sees the Sheik in the entrance, watching.

THE SHEIK
I thought they would never love another as they love me.

BEN HUR
They have taken me into their family.

In the distance the voice of an Arab begins to sing. Other voices join in. The Sheik turns to the horses.

325
CONT'D
(3)

SHEIK

Rest well, my stars. Tomorrow we go up to the city.

(to Ben Hur)

And then, Judah, then! If you defeat Messala, the news will scorch the streets of the whole Roman world!

BEN HUR (wryly)

He's not defeated yet.

SHEIK (carried away by his vision)

Defeated! And the new Governor there to see it! Think how this will make your name ring like the beating of metal --

BEN HUR

Pontius Pilate here?

SHEIK

Ready to grind his heel into us. But you will make him see what men are born in this land.

BEN HUR

I knew Pilate in Rome. He'll govern fairly enough.

SHEIK

No, not a Roman! Give us a victory, the confidence to rid ourselves of them, once and for all.

BEN HUR (after a pause)

I only know that I race against Messala.

DISSOLVE:

326 OUT

EXTERIOR - PADDOCK - LONG SHOT

326X1

The area is crowded with chariots: some stationary, others being brought into the area. Much tension as the stable boys and grooms make last minute preparations... adjusting the horses' harnesses, examining the horses' hooves (the atmosphere as described in Soldati notes). THE CAMERA STOPS as IT COMES to Ben Hur's chariot. The Sheik watches carefully as his men make final adjustments to the horses' harness, etc.

INT. CHAMBER

327X1

Ben Hur is finishing dressing; he adjusts his helmet. He goes out onto the gallery.

EXT. GALLERY

328X1

Ben Hur passes other drivers as he proceeds to the paddock. He pauses a moment at the open door of one of the cubicles; his attention arrested.

ANGLE SHOOTING PAST BEN HUR THROUGH AN ARCH

329

In his cubicle the Corinthian driver, wearing a green tunic, can be seen. Ready for the race, wearing helmet and holding his whip, he kneels reverently in prayer. Ben Hur gives the man a brief look, then goes on his way.

MOVING SHOT - BEN HUR - IN GALLERY

330

Opposite the contestant's chambers are a series of large stone arches over a balustrade. As Ben Hur walks along, a different banner can be seen fluttering in each arch. At the end of the gallery he descends a staircase.

ANGLE IN PADDOCK - FOLLOWING BEN HUR

331

He threads his way through the crowded paddock, passing chariots and horses. Wheel-wrights are making last minute checks of chariots; shoemasters are examining the horses' feet. Drivers, distinguished by their helmets, colored tunics and dagger belts, wait near their teams. One driver is being rubbed with heavy dark boar's ointment. Another kisses an amulet which he wears around his neck and murmurs an incantation. Ben Hur makes his way to this team: the white Arabs are harnessed and ready, with stable boys at their heads. The Sheik is there; solemn, tense.

SHEIK
They're ready.

331 cont'd

BEN HUR
And so am I.

He checks the straps and harness: he steps between the horses and examines the yoke and its fastenings. The Sheik watches nervously. At the SOUND of a TRUMPET, both look around.

WHAT THEY SEE

332

The head groom, wearing his badge on a chain around his neck, stands at the exit tunnel next to a uniformed trumpeter, who is SOUNDING THE CALL TO THE POST. The activity of the handlers, the wheel-wrights, the shoemasters stops. They move away from the teams. Drivers get into chariots.

ANGLE NEAR THE SHEIK'S TEAM

333

Ben Hur stops his inspection of the yoke and goes to the horses' heads. He has a smile and an encouraging pat for each horse. When he reaches Antares, he grips the animal's jowls, looks into his eyes.

BEN HUR
Remember.... Hold steady...

He leaves them and gets into the chariot. Stable boys hand him the reins. Ben Hur carries no whip. Another TRUMPET SIGNAL IS HEARD.

FULL SHOT - PADDOCK

334

In single file the chariots move into the tunnel. The Corinthian is in first position. Next is the Syrian entry. Ben Hur takes his position in third place, the Sheik walking beside him. The other teams move in quickly behind.

FULL SHOT - OUTER PADDOCK

335

Above the tunnel which connects the outer paddock area with the inner paddock. The chariots parade at a quick trot while the starter looks down from above. At the far end of the area, the teams turn sharply left, each team stopping between the columns opposite its arch. The Corinthian is nearest the CAMERA, the Syrian next, and then Ben Hur.

From his box the starter looks down and sees a vacancy opposite number six arch. For a moment nothing happens. The handlers are having difficulty holding some of the teams. The horses of the Corinthian chafe and stamp, and the handlers struggle to calm them. 335 cont'd

STARTER (shouting angrily)
Where is the Roman? It is time!
(calling)
Number Six!

There is a CLATTER OF HOOVES and the four blacks of Messala emerge from the tunnel at a fast trot, stable boys running along at the horses' heads. The Tribune, wearing a black and gold tunic, stands in his chariot. He drives the length of the paddock and wheels smartly to the left. As the chariot comes close to CAMERA, knife-like extension on the hubs of the wheels glitter in the sun.

CLOSE SHOT - THE SHEIK

336

He stands near his team, looking off toward Messala in shocked anger.

SHEIK (in alarm)
Judah, look! He's driving a Greek chariot!

Ben Hur turns, sees Messala's chariot.

MED. SHOT

336X1

Messala's chariot enters; he stops before Ben Hur.

MESSALA (lightly)
This is the day, Judah. It's between us now.

BEN HUR (grimly)
Yes, this is the day.

MESSALA
And tonight we'll drink to the victor, you and I.

Ben Hur, face set, turns his back on Messala, who smiles.

STARTER'S VOICE
Chariots to their places!

MESSALA (looks up and shouts)
Hail, Jupiter! And give me Victory!

Messala whirls past Ben Hur and the Sheik.

CLOSE SHOT - BEN HUR AND THE SHEIK

336X2

SHEIK (grimly)
 Judah, be careful. Don't let him near
 you. That wheel...

FULL SHOT - OUTER PADDOCK - FROM ABOVE THE TUNNEL

337

As Messala takes position between the columns opposite the sixth arch, a solitary horseman, grandly uniformed, rides out of the tunnel. This is the Master of Chariots. He carries a staff with a brilliant banner on it. At the middle arch he reins in, wheels his horse about, faces the starter. A strident FANFARE OF TRUMPETS is heard from the Circus. The starter gives a signal. The Master of Chariots dips and raises his banner and rides forward. Behind him the Chariots move toward the arches.

MOVING SHOT - CLOSE BEHIND THE MASTER OF CHARIOTS

338

THE CAMERA FOLLOWS HIM as he rides through the center arch. As he emerges on the other side, the magnificent pagan spectacle of the Circus is revealed dramatically and suddenly - the great banks of humanity rise steeply all around the oval arena. On the right is the purple-bannered Tribunal of the Imperial Governor. In the center of the arena, circled by the sand of the running track, is the spina, a stone infield island with seven carved dolphins piled at one end.

As the Master of Chariots appears, the crowd greets him with a THUNDEROUS ROAR. For a moment the CAMERA MOVES WITH HIM while the CHEERS CONTINUE.

AN ANGLE SHOOTING TOWARD THE ENTRY ARCHES

339

As the nine teams appear behind the Master of Chariots the ROAR OF THE CROWD MOUNTS with savage anticipation. The Master of Chariots rides toward the straight stretch, leading past the Tribunal.

MED. SHOT - TWELVE TRUMPETERS

339X1

They raise their trumpets and SOUND A FANFARE.

EXTREME LONG SHOT - OVER THE RIM OF THE CIRCUS

340

In the distance we see Jerusalem. In the Circus the straight line of chariots rounds the curve.

GOVERNOR'S TRIBUNAL

341

Pontius Pilate, wearing a purple-bordered toga, and his suite of officers, elegant ladies, high officials, enter the governor's box. Close to Pilate, eager and attentive, is Drusus. Pilate takes his seat; he looks about him, pleased at the display.

PILATE

Splendid! Splendid! I must say we do ourselves well in the provinces....

An elegant lady beside him demurs.

LADY

Ah yes, but Jerusalem is hardly Rome...

PILATE

Even so....

(to the others)

I suppose everyone has a favorite to win.

LADY

Corinth is mine.

The other members of the suite murmur: some are for Corinth, others for Messina, most for Rome. Drusus sees his chance to impress the Governor.

DRUSUS

The Tribune Messala will win, sir.

PILATE

You seem unusually certain.

DRUSUS

He drives for Rome.

PILATE (amused by this

pomposity)

Admirable sentiment! What a patriotic young man you are!

Drusus beams. Pilate exchanges a look with the elegant lady.

MOVING SHOT - THE TEAMS

342

THE CAMERA TRAVELS with the teams as they trot along in formation behind the Master of Chariots.

THE CAMERA TRAVELS with the teams as they round the first curve, still holding their formation abreast of each other.

CLOSE SHOT - ESTHER, SIMONIDES AND MALLUCH

343

They sit in the section near the starting line, close to the box of the Governor. They watch the approaching chariots.

SIMONIDES (puzzled and tense)
Is this his answer to Messala? What does he hope to gain by this?

ESTHER (fervently)
God help him to let it rest at this.

SIMONIDES (grave and anxious)
I cannot see into his thoughts.

MED. MOVING SHOT - LINE OF CHARIOTS

344

Led by the Master of Chariots the line of chariots moves down the spina.

CLOSE MOVING SHOT - MESSALA

345

Messala looks around as if sizing up his opponents, then he reaches for his whip and takes a firm hold on it.

CLOSE MOVING SHOT - BEN HUR

346

as he sees Messala's action, and he now looks down toward Messala's hub.

CLOSE SHOT

347

Messala's murderous hub glittering as it catches the sun.

CLOSE MOVING SHOT - THE CORINTHIAN

348

The Corinthian also has looked at the hub; now he looks straight ahead and wraps the reins firmly around his wrists.

CLOSE MOVING SHOT - THE RED DRIVER

349

The red driver moves a little away from Messala to keep his distance and not get tangled up with the hub.

CLOSE MOVING SHOT - THE GREEN DRIVER

350

The green driver tenses, gets a firm hold of his reins and reaches for his whip.

FULL SHOT INCLUDING THE MASTER OF CHARIOTS

351

He looks over his shoulder to check on the formation. It is plain that the two drivers flanking Messala keep a more cautious distance from him than the other drivers do from each other.

CLOSE SHOT IN GRAND STAND NEAR TRIBUNAL

351X1

Balthasar and Iras sit in the roofed section reserved for the privileged. The Sheik plows his way through the crowd and takes the seat next to Balthasar. The Sheik is very disturbed as he looks at the chariots.

SHEIK

That filthy Roman! Look! He comes with chariot wheels that kill!

BALTHASAR (quietly)

Evil begets evil.

There is a SOUND like a distant roll of thunder -- the eager anticipatory murmuring of a hundred thousand voices. The Sheik's glance goes again toward the track.

EXTREME LONG SHOT FROM HIGH ABOVE

352

Led by the Master of Chariots, the teams round the second turn in formation at a trot.

LOW ANGLE IN THE CURVE

353

The entire formation moves from the back stretch to the front, the CAMERA PANNING with them from the grandstand facing the back stretch to the grandstand facing the front stretch. They near the starting line.

GOVERNOR'S TRIBUNAL

354

The Governor and his suite watch attentively.
Suddenly the Governor notices Messala's chariot.

PILATE

I see now why you're so certain of a
Roman victory. The Tribune drives a
Greek chariot.

DRUSUS

It's for his protection, sir. You see,
the Jew means to kill him. He hates
Messala.

PILATE

What Jew?

DRUSUS

Ben Hur.

PILATE

Ben Hur?

DRUSUS (points to arena)

He drives for Judea.

PILOT (frowns, remembering)

Ah, yes...yes.

(to his retinue)

I do believe it's going to be a most
interesting race.

AN ANGLE TOWARD THE TRACK WITH TRIBUNAL IN F.G.

355

The Tribunal with Pilate are watching the approaching
chariots. The Master of Chariots, as he comes into
line with the Tribunal, begins to slow down. Behind
him the drivers are keeping their formation abreast of
each other perfectly. A BUZZ OF EXPECTATION rises
from the sea of spectators.

EXTREME LONG SHOT

355A

The formation of drivers comes to the starting
position and stops.

MEDIUM SHOT - TRUMPETERS

355B

They raise their trumpets and SOUND A FANFARE.

ANGLE FROM INFIELD SPINA

355C

THE CAMERA IS SHOOTING ALONG the starting line, across the backs of the teams, toward the Governor's Tribunal. While the drivers grip their reins, fighting to hold in the horses, Pilate rises from his throne.

CLOSE SHOT - PILATE

356

While he waits for silence, he makes an aside to his suite.

PILATE

And now it's time for me to amuse the people.

He stands there looking at the contestants below: there is absolute silence now. Then he speaks:

PILATE

Citizens, we, the governor of Judea, bring you the greetings of your Emperor, the Divine Tiberius. To his glory and to the glory of Rome we dedicate these games. We have assembled the finest drivers in the Empire from...

Pilate, insufficiently briefed, tries to recall the cities. The eager Drusus quickly gives the Governor a list of those competing.

PILATE (softly)

Thank you.

(continues resonantly)

Alexandria...

MED. SHOT - CAMERA PANS ALONG line of chariots

356A

PILATE'S VOICE

Messina, Lubia, Cyprus, Rome, Corinth, Athens, Phyrigia, Judea.

CLOSE SHOT - PILATE

356B

An unexpected roar of applause on this last. Pilate frowns, not pleased. He shouts through the applause.

PILATE

Let the victor's crown of laurel go to him who wins this day. Hail, Caesar!

LONG SHOT

356C

There is full-throated if not entirely unanimous answering roar from the crowd:

CROWD
Hail, Caesar!

The Governor takes his seat.

CLOSE SHOT AT THE STARTING LINE

357

The horses seem to sense that the moment has come. They are raring to go. The Corinthian's horse jumps ahead and has to be backed up. Ben Hur's whites are standing on their hind legs, clawing the air.

CLOSE SHOT AT STARTING LINE

357X1

The red driver is crowding the green one. He can hardly hold his horses. He looks down toward the hub of his chariot.

CLOSE SHOT AT STARTING LINE

357X2

The wheel of the red driver has been pulled over the axle of the green driver and has to be untangled.

CLOSE SHOT AT STARTING LINE

357X3

Ben Hur's whites are still rearing, but Ben Hur talks to them and then they calm down, settling themselves.

CLOSE SHOT - ESTHER, SIMONIDES AND MALLUCH

357X4

They watch tensely.

CLOSE SHOT AT STARTING LINE

357X5

On the Syrian's team. One of the horses nearest the Corinthian's team rears high and comes down locking his front legs over the withers of the near horse on the Corinthian's team. Helpers run in and grab the animals heads and start untangling them.

CLOSE SHOT AT STARTING LINE

357X6

Messala is having trouble holding back his blacks. They are rearing, then they settle down.

SHOOTING - ACROSS THE STARTING LINE

357X7

The horses are frenzied, but the chariots are now in a straight line.

CLOSE SHOT - STARTER ON SPINA

357X8

He holds flag in readiness, then drops it, signaling the start.

FULL SHOT

358

The teams leap forward in full gallop. The Circus is a bedlam of cheering, shouting, screaming as the crowd sees that the race has begun! THE CAMERA CONTINUES TO TRAVEL with the teams as they charge down the straight toward the first turn, drivers leaning forward tensely, some using their whips for early advantage, others biding their time, all expertly jockeying for position.

CLOSE TRAVEL ON MESSALA

358A

In front of Messala high, and overlapping the previous scene. Messala cuts in front of the red driver, causing him to pull up and over to avoid a tangle with the green driver.

A FLASH OF THE RED DRIVER

359

Reining in sharply, his face contorted with fury.

SET SHOT - FIRST TURN

359X1

The other teams come in wide, cutting in close to the spina turn. They hold the formation they were in at the start.

TRAVEL - SHOOTING BACK - BACK STRETCH

360

The Corinthian is in the lead and on the rail; only a horse's length behind and out to the side a little is the Syrian. Messala is coming on the outside. As he gets ahead of him, Messala reins sharply to the left.

CLOSE MOVING INSERT:

360X1

Messala's hub is coming closer to the Syrian's wheel.

CLOSE MOVING SHOT - BACK STRETCH

360X2

The Syrian watches with horror Messala's hub coming closer to his hub and his horse's legs: he reins over toward his left, scraping the spina.

CLOSE SHOT - MESSALA - BACK STRETCH

360X3

Messala realizes how easily he eliminated the Syrian and forges ahead.

TRAVEL - CLOSE - BACK STRETCH

361

Ben Hur works his way through the field and pulls up alongside the red driver.

FULL TRAVEL - BACK STRETCH

362

SHOOTING STRAIGHT BACK as they pound down the last half of the back stretch. The Corinthian is on the rail in front. Messala has just crowded the Syrian to the wall. He whips his team to overtake the one remaining team between himself and the lead. Ben Hur and the red driver pull up to fourth and fifth places. As Messala pulls up along the Corinthian, he swings his team hard toward the other team. The Corinthian swings wide and Messala cuts in towards the rail and takes the lead.

EXTREME LONG SHOT

362X1

As the formation makes the second turn from the back stretch into the front stretch, the crowd rears.

CLOSE PAN SHOT IN TURN

362X2

As the last of the formation comes around the turn one of the chariots takes a corner too close, hits the wall and then rolls over. The other teams behind him try to get around him.

LOW ANGLE PAN IN SECOND TURN

362X3

As the chariots make their turn Messala is in the lead. Messala heads into the front stretch toward the grandstand; the crowd is roaring.

CLOSE SHOT - AT GOVERNOR'S TRIBUNAL

363

Drusus leans forward.

DRUSUS (elated)
He'll not be headed now!

Pilate watches in silence.

CLOSE SHOT - THE SHEIK, BALTHASAR AND IRAS

364

Watching tensely as they follow progress of the teams.

SHOT FROM THEIR ANGLE - FRONT STRETCH

365

The teams thunder down the straight. Messala is in front, the Corinthian closes behind him. Ben Hur is with the rest of the field bunched in behind.

CLOSE MOVING SHOT

365X1

Ben Hur just barely touches the back of the whites with his reins; they are flying.

FULL SHOT OF THE FIELD OF DRIVERS - FRONT STRETCH

365X2

Ben Hur's team breaks through on the outside and gets into the lead of the bunch, putting him in third place.

MEDIUM SHOT - OVER DOLPHINS

366

As the field, led by Messala, flash by in background, the position of the first Dolphin is changed, leaving eight others.

MOVING SHOT - SHOOTING AHEAD OVER MESSALA'S SHOULDER

366X1

Messala is thundering down the front stretch toward the first curve. He looks back over his shoulder.

MOVING SHOT - MESSALA'S POINT OF VIEW - FRONT STRETCH

366X2

The Corinthian is close behind and immediately behind the Corinthian and to the outside, moving fast, is Ben Hur!

FIXED SHOT - FIRST TURN

367

They round the turn and plunge for the second time into the back stretch -- Messala leading, then the Corinthian, Ben Hur third.

CLOSE SHOT - ESTHER AND SIMONIDES

368

They look on apprehensively.

MOVING FULL SHOT - BACK STRETCH

368X1

As they tear down the stretch, the Corinthian lashes his team and makes a bid to pass Messala, who swerves out, blocking him. The Corinthian drops back sharply.

MOVING CLOSE SHOT - BACK STRETCH

368X2

The Corinthian, now, tries to pass on the inside.

MOVING CLOSE SHOT - BACK STRETCH

368X3

Messala swerves to the left, hugging the wall of the spina again, forcing the Corinthian to drop back.

PAN SHOT IN SECOND TURN

368X4

As they round the turn leading into the front stretch, the Corinthian corners wide, lashing his horses, while Messala clings to the wall. In this position Messala is unable to block the Corinthian, who gives his team their heads, beating them furiously.

MOVING CLOSE SHOT - FRONT STRETCH

368X5

As they come into the straight, the Corinthian is slightly ahead of Messala. The crowd is crazy with excitement.

CLOSE SHOT AT TRIBUNAL

369

The Romans watch tensely, silently.

CLOSE SHOT - THE SHEIK AND BALTHASAR

370

The Sheik's eyes are bright with excitement.

MOVING TWO SHOT - MESSALA AND CORINTHIAN - FRONT STRETCH

371

They pound down the front stretch neck and neck. Messala glances to the side, sees the Corinthian forging ahead.

MOVING CLOSE SHOT - MESSALA - FRONT STRETCH

371X1

Messala swerves, driving toward the Corinthian.

MOVING CLOSE SHOT - TWO WHEELS - FRONT STRETCH

371X2

Messala's hub spike moves closer to the Corinthian's wheel.

CLOSE SHOT - THE SHEIK AND BALTHASAR

372

The Sheik is on his feet, screaming.

SHEIK

He'll cut his wheels!

MOVING TWO SHOT - MESSALA AND THE CORINTHIAN - FRONT STRETCH 373

As they race, side by side, Messala moves ever closer to the Corinthian. Both drivers lash their teams unmercifully.

CLOSE MOVING SHOT - THE CORINTHIAN - FRONT STRETCH 373X1

He looks toward his wheels and then to Messala.

THE CORINTHIAN
Roman -- keep your distance!

CLOSE MOVING SHOT - MESSALA - FRONT STRETCH 373X2

Messala forces his team ever closer.

CLOSE MOVING SHOT - THE WHEELS 374

Messala's outside wheel comes nearer and nearer the Corinthian's inside wheel. Then Messala's lethal hub impinges on the Corinthian's spokes. There is a rending SOUND - a shower of splinters.

ANGLE FROM OUTSIDE WALL TOWARD THE SPINA - SHOOTING ACROSS THE TRACK - FRONT STRETCH 375

As the chariots race by, and the Corinthian's wheel collapses, the chariot overturns, the Corinthian is flung onto the track and dragged along by his wildly galloping team.

CLOSE MOVING SHOT - THE CORINTHIAN - FRONT STRETCH 376

being dragged by the reins. Struggling, he manages to get rid of the reins.

ANGLE FROM THE OUTSIDE WALL - ACROSS TRACK - FRONT STRETCH 377

As the Corinthian lies there, Ben Hur's chariot flashes past on the inside. The yellow team flashes past on the other side of the man.

CLOSE SHOT - THE CORINTHIAN - LOW ANGLE - BLUE
BACKING SHOT 377X1

The Corinthian, slowly, begins to rise, but the next team, unable to swerve out in time, strikes him. He is mangled by the hooves of the horses, run over by the chariot.

CLOSE SHOT - ESTHER - SIMONIDES 377X2

Esther covers her face in horror; the crowd roars behind them.

MEDIUM PAN SHOT 377X3

The red driver and others flash by running over the Corinthian. When the last chariot has passed, men run out, put the Corinthian on a litter, carry him away. Horsemen ride after the Corinthian's run-away team, maneuvering it off the track.

CLOSE SHOT - AT OTHER END OF THE SPINA 378

One more dolphin is removed. Seven dolphins remain.

MEDIUM SHOT AT FIRST TURN 378X1

The chariots are sliding out of the turn, into the back stretch of the third lap. Messala is in the lead. Ben Hur close behind him, crowded by the red driver.

CLOSE MOVING TWO SHOT - BEN HUR AND RED DRIVER -
BACK STRETCH 378X2

Ben Hur begins to move away from the spina to overtake Messala. Immediately the red driver moves up alongside of him, next to the spina.

CLOSE MOVING SHOT - BEN HUR'S POINT OF VIEW - BACK
STRETCH 378X3

Messala is thundering down the back stretch. He looks over his shoulder and sees Ben Hur crowding him. He whips his horses, looks back again.

MOVING HIGH SHOT OVER MESSALA - BACK STRETCH

378X4

Messala is in the foreground, whipping his horses. Behind, Ben Hur on the outside, and the red driver hugging the spina. Ben Hur touches the whites lightly with the reins. They begin to pull abreast of Messala.

CLOSE MOVING SHOT - MESSALA - BACK STRETCH

378X5

Messala glances to his side. Ben Hur is almost abreast.

379 OUT

EXTREME LONG SHOT - HIGH ANGLE FROM THE RIM OF THE CIRCUS

380-384

They go into the turn. Messala corners perilously close to the wall of the spina. Ben Hur corners recklessly behind him, but wider. As they break into the straight again, Ben Hur begins to overtake the Roman. The crowd rises with excitement as the whites make their bid.

CLOSER MOVING SHOT - MESSALA AND BEN HUR - FRONT STRETCH

385

As they race down the straight in front of the Tribunal, Ben Hur begins to pass Messala.

CLOSE MOVING SHOT - BEN HUR AND HIS TEAM - FRONT STRETCH

386

He leans forward tensely.

BEN HUR
Now! Now!

He looks over to Messala.

CLOSE MOVING SHOT - MESSALA - FRONT STRETCH

387

Messala is watching Ben Hur, reins to the right.

MOVING SHOT - WIDER ANGLE - FRONT STRETCH 388

As the teams storm down the front stretch, Messala continues to bear out on Ben Hur, forcing him over. But Ben Hur's racing wide has gained him space. He begins to forge past the Roman. The Yellow Driver has come up behind and outside of Ben Hur.

389 OUT

CLOSE MOVING SHOT - MESSALA AND BEN HUR - FRONT STRETCH 390

As Messala sees Ben Hur will pass him, he lashes out with his whip, cutting the white horses.

CLOSE SHOT - THE SHEIK AND BALTHASAR 391

The Sheik is beside himself with rage.

SHEIK

The Roman dog! Look! He'll blind my stars!

MOVING SHOT - BEN HUR AND HIS TEAM - FRONT STRETCH 392

In a panic the whites break their stride, losing speed. As they stampede off at a tangent, they block the path of the Yellow Driver's team which is thundering on from behind.

CLOSE SHOT - ESTHER AND SIMONIDES 392X1

watching breathlessly.

CLOSE PANNING SHOT - FRONT STRETCH 392A

The Yellow Driver, trying to avoid collision, swings his horses close to the spina wall. The chariot skids, hits the wall. The wheel breaks. The chariot does an end-over-end, spilling the Yellow Driver in the close foreground. He groggily gets to his feet and staggers to safety.

CLOSE SHOT - DOLPHINS ON SPINA 392B

Another Dolphin is taken down, leaving six.

MEDIUM PAN SHOT - BEN HUR AND HIS TEAM IN FIRST
CURVE

393

The whites are still rearing wildly, as other teams pass them, Ben Hur struggling to keep control.

BEN HUR

Steady, Antares. Steady!

CLOSE SHOT - THE SHEIK

394

He shakes his clenched fist.

THE SHEIK

He used his whip on my horses. The Roman pig!

A Roman officer moves toward the Sheik, seizes him by the arm.

OFFICER

Arab, you speak of a Roman Tribune!

THE SHEIK

Tribune! He is a pig!

Others in the crowd surge close, surrounding the Roman officer threateningly.

THE CROWD

The Sheik is right!

The Roman is not honest!

The Roman does not deserve to win!

Let the Sheik go!

Roman soldiers come forward, pushing through the crowd to the officer's side.

ANGLE IN THE GOVERNOR'S TRIBUNAL

395

Pilate and the other Romans.

DRUSUS

The Sheik and his friends have no stomach for losing.

PILATE

Messala brings no honor to Rome today.

CLOSE PAN SHOT - BEN HUR AND HIS TEAM IN FIRST CURVE 396

He has succeeded in calming down the horses.

BEN HUR

Good Antares -- good fellows! Go!

He gives them the reins and they leap away. The cheers of the crowd echo as he swings around the corner.

MOVING SHOT - BEN HUR - BACK STRETCH 396X1

The whites dig dirt as they stretch out trying to catch up with the others.

LONG MOVING SHOT ON BACK STRETCH 397

The field is well into the back stretch. Ben Hur is last, but the whites seem to be flying.

CLOSE MOVING SHOT - BEN HUR - BACK STRETCH 398

He is leaning forward as he begins to move up.

BEN HUR

Good, Antares. Good!

399 OUT

MOVING HIGH SHOT OVER BEN HUR AND HIS TEAM TO THE FIELD - BACK STRETCH 400

The whites put on a tremendous burst of speed. They begin to pass the other teams right and left.

LOW ANGLE MOVING SHOT UNDER BEN HUR'S CHARIOT 400A

We see his two wheels on two sides of the screen and the hooves of the four whites as they throw dirt.

EXTREME LONG SHOT FROM RIM OF CIRCUS 401

As the field makes the turn, Messala is in the lead. The Red Driver is pressing him closely, with the others bunched behind. Ben Hur is in the rear but gaining ground rapidly. Messala corners spectacularly close to the spina wall. The Red driver hangs on doggedly, skidding as he corners without losing ground.

PAN SHOT - FRONT STRETCH

402

Messala thundering down the straight, Ben Hur closing in.

CLOSE MOVING SHOT AT BACK OF MESSALA - BACK STRETCH

402X1

As he thunders down the front stretch, he looks over his shoulders.

MOVING SHOT - MESSALA'S POINT OF VIEW - THE TEAMS FRONT STRETCH

403

Ben Hur is no longer last. He passes teams on the left and right.

CLOSE SHOT - THE SHEIK

404

He rocks back and forth in a frenzy of excitement.

SHEIK

Come! My children! Come!

MOVING CLOSE SHOT OVER BEN HUR'S SHOULDERS - FRONT STRETCH

404X1

Ben Hur is urging on his team. He weaves his way through the field, only the Red Driver and Messala ahead of him.

CLOSE MOVING SHOT - MESSALA - FRONT STRETCH

404X2

He sees Ben Hur is gaining, and he applies his whip to his horses. He runs into the first turn with a tremendous speed.

DOLPHINS ON SPINA

405

Another dolphin is taken down, as the above formation flashes by.

FULL SHOT - TURN INTO BACK STRETCH

406

Messala's tremendous speed carries him wide from the spina. The Red Driver also swings wide, as does one other driver. Ben Hur swings in and hugs the spina coming out of the turn. Other chariots skid around the turn. One team digs dirt and rolls over, spilling the driver in the midst of oncoming chariots.

CLOSE SHOT - ESTHER AND SIMONIDES

406X1

She looks away, unable to watch.

CLOSE PAN SHOT - BACK STRETCH

406X2

Ben Hur has bypassed the others and is behind Messala. The Red Driver is close behind.

CLOSE MOVING SHOT - MESSALA - BACK STRETCH

407

Horses' heads filling screen. The blacks are at full gallop, nostrils wide. Messala glances back.

WIDER MOVING SHOT - MESSALA AND BEN HUR IN BACK STRETCH

407X1

The white Arabs begin to forge abreast of the blacks. Messala lashes with his whip.

CLOSE MOVING SHOT - MESSALA - BACK STRETCH

407X2

With a frantic effort he begins to pull his team over to his right.

SECOND TURN - MESSALA AND BEN HUR

408

They go into the turn at breakneck speed. They go around almost touching.

MOVING SHOT - IN FRONT OF MESSALA AND BEN HUR - FRONT STRETCH

408X1

Messala keeps bearing out on Ben Hur. Ben Hur gives way to the right to avoid a crash. Suddenly the Red Driver begins to pass both.

CLOSE MOVING SHOT - FRONT STRETCH

408X2

Messala sees the Red Driver. He takes off to crowd him into spina.

MEDIUM PAN SHOT - FRONT STRETCH

408X3

Messala cuts across the field, narrowly missing another chariot. As the driver tries to swerve out of the way, his inside horse goes down. The other three horses hold their feet and go on, stripping the harness off the fallen horse. A chariot directly back of the downed horse cuts hard to the left to avoid hitting the horse. In so doing, he collides and locks wheels with a chariot at the spina wall.

CLOSE SHOT ON LOCKED CHARIOTS - FRONT STRETCH

408X4

A wheel is pulled from each of the chariots and both go into a roll. The driver next to the spina is dragged away with them. The other rolls in the track. Other teams pass through the scene.

CLOSE MOVING SHOT - BEN HUR - FRONT STRETCH

409

He reacts to the wreck and reins sharp to the left to get behind Messala.

BEN HUR

Now! Now! Antares -- Aldebaran -- Go!

CLOSE SHOT ON DOLPHINS

409X1

Another dolphin is changing position, leaving only three.

SHOT AT FIRST TURN

410

Messala is in the front. Ben Hur is cutting into the curve behind him.

CLOSE PAN SHOT - BACK STRETCH

410X1

As they are turning into the back stretch, Messala is a little ahead and away from the spina. He makes no effort to head Ben Hur off.

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CLOSE MOVING SHOT - MESSALA - BACK STRETCH

410X2

He looks over to Ben Hur. He doesn't use his whip or try to crowd Ben Hur. But he is building up his speed.

CLOSE MOVING SHOT - BEN HUR - BACK STRETCH

410X3

Ben Hur is almost abreast of Messala. He is watching him intently, also Messala's murderous hub, but it doesn't seem to move any closer.

CLOSE SHOT - THE SHEIK

411

He is frantic.

THE SHEIK

Get away from the wall!

CLOSE SHOT - TRIBUNAL

411X1

Pilate rises slowly, watching the two drivers thundering down the back stretch.

MEDIUM SHOT - SECOND TURN

411X2

Messala and Ben Hur go into the turn with murderous speed...Messala on the outside, Ben Hur on the inside.

CLOSE MOVING SHOT - MESSALA - FRONT STRETCH

412

He glances at Ben Hur.

CLOSE MOVING SHOT - BEN HUR - FRONT STRETCH

412X1

He looks ahead, reacts as he sees:

MOVING AHEAD SHOT - BEN HUR'S POINT OF VIEW - FRONT STRETCH

413

Directly in his path is the wreck of the second chariot. Pickup men are trying to remove it.

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MOVING SHOT - BEN HUR AND MESSALA - FRONT STRETCH

413X1

Ben Hur looks toward Messala, then tries to ease away from the wall of the spina. Messala keeps him pinned down.

MEDIUM SHOT IN FRONT STRETCH

414

Shooting over the wrecked chariot. Messala and Ben Hur bearing down toward it. Men working on the wreck run for safety.

MOVING CLOSE UP OF BEN HUR - FRONT STRETCH

414X1

He leans forward and urges on his horses:

BEN HUR
Up Antares! Up!!!

He begins to raise the reins.

PAN SHOT - CLOSE ANGLE - FRONT STRETCH

415

The two chariots come thundering down towards the obstacle. Messala is on the outside and passes by it. Ben Hur's team sails right over the wreck. His chariot bounces over it.

CLOSE SHOT ON DOLPHINS

415X1

As they are changed. There are only two left.

PAN SHOT IN FIRST TURN

415X2

Messala and Ben Hur as they skid around and come out of the turn.

CLOSE UP - MESSALA - BACK STRETCH

415X3

He moves in for the kill.

INSERT - THE SPINNING WHEELS

416

Messala's inner wheel moves toward Ben Hur's outer wheel. But Ben Hur moves ahead a few feet. The Roman's wheel swings in close but misses.

WIDER MOVING SHOT - MESSALA AND BEN HUR - BACK STRETCH 417

The Roman lashes the blacks. Ben Hur leans forward, giving the whites their head. Messala forges up a few feet. He glances downward, and reins sharply left again.

INSERT - THE SPINNING WHEELS

418

Messala has gained, but not quite enough to cut Ben Hur's spokes. The Roman's hub catches the rim of Ben Hur's wheel. There is a WHINE - splinters fly - but Ben Hur's wheel holds.

CLOSE SHOT - IN TRIBUNAL

419

The Romans rise.

HIGH FIXED SHOT - POINT OF VIEW OF THE ROMANS

419X1

Messala and Ben Hur come around the corner neck on neck.

CLOSE SHOT OF THE SHEIK

420

He is on his feet, shrieking.

THE SHEIK

Don't let him close to your wheel!

CLOSE MOVING SHOT - MESSALA - FRONT STRETCH

421

The whites are pulling slightly but definitely to the front. He reins in left, whipping the blacks brutally.

MOVING INSERT - THE SPINNING WHEELS

422

Messala's wheel comes in behind and inside of Ben Hur's, moves forward, slams against it. There is a tearing SCREECH as the two wheels lock. But Messala's hub is past Ben Hur's wheel.

CLOSE MOVING SHOT - BEN HUR

422X1

He looks to his right to see damage to his chariot.

MOVING INSERT

422X2

Messala's cutting hub has penetrated the side of chariot. Ben Hur has to move his foot away because of the nearness of the cutting hub.

CLOSE SHOT ON DOLPHINS

422X3

Another dolphin is moving, leaving only one -- the last one -- standing.

CLOSE SHOT - ESTHER AND SIMONIDES

422X4

They stare in dismay.

PAN SHOT AT FIRST TURN

422X5

The two chariots come around the corner, locked together. Neither gives way.

CLOSE MOVING SHOT - BACK STRETCH

422X6

Messala suddenly starts to whip Ben Hur.

CLOSE SHOT - BEN HUR - BACK STRETCH

423

Messala's whip hits him. Ben Hur grabs Messala's whip, pulls it away.

MOVING SHOT - MESSALA AND BEN HUR - BACK STRETCH

424

For a few moments the two chariots are thundering side by side, locked together, kicking up sand. Ben Hur grips the whip, reaches out and hits Messala. Messala, to avoid the blow, reins sharply to the right.

ESTHER - SIMONIDES

424X1

She gasps with fright.

PAN SHOT AROUND SECOND TURN

424X2

The two chariots spin around the curve locked together. Messala's blacks are pulling away from Ben Hur's chariot.

INSERT - THE LOCKED WHEELS

425

As Messala's team pulls to the right, the two wheels are rubbing against each other. Suddenly Messala's wheel snaps off and the axle begins to dig dirt.

PAN SHOT - MESSALA'S CHARIOT

426

Messala's chariot overturns. The Roman's black and gold figure rolls out of his chariot but his hands are caught in the reins and he is dragged along behind his bouncing chariot.

CLOSE MOVING SHOT - BEN HUR - FRONT STRETCH

427

He glances back for a split second.

CLOSE MOVING SHOT - MESSALA

428

He is dragged along in the dust.

PAN SHOT - FRONT STRETCH

428X1

As the next team comes tearing down the straight, it runs over Messala.

CLOSE MOVING SHOT MESSALA UNDER HOOFS

428X2

As he is dragged along, he tries to protect himself, but the team is unable to slow down, tramples him.

CLOSE SHOT - THE SHEIK AND BALTHASAR

429

They are on their feet. As the cries of the crowd rise around them, the Sheik stares incredulously. Balthasar's lips move as if in prayer.

430-431 OUT

CLOSE MOVING SHOT - BEN HUR - FRONT STRETCH

432

He glances ahead toward the finish line.

ESTHER AND SIMONIDES

Their relief is evident. They watch silently.

FULL SHOT TOWARD FINISH LINE AND TRIBUNAL

433

Ben Hur is on the lead, the other teams are close behind him. Ben Hur crosses the finish line first. A great swelling cheer comes from the crowd.

CLOSE SHOT - THE SHEIK AND BALTHASAR

434

The Sheik is beside himself with joy. He embraces Balthasar, turns to embrace strangers.

FULL SHOT - THE STADIUM FROM RIM

435

still rocking with cheers. Ben Hur brings his team around, drives it toward the Governor's Tribunal. Pick-up men on horse and on foot run out and bring Messala's team to a halt. The third driver brings his team to a stop. Helpers begin to extricate Messala's body.

CLOSE SHOT AT TRIBUNAL

436

The Romans watch Ben Hur approach, as cheers fill the Circus.

CLOSE SHOT - BEN HUR

437

He brings the whites to a stop directly under the Tribunal. He looks up toward Pilate.

WIDER ANGLE

438

Ben Hur hands the reins to an attendant. He gets down from the chariot, walks to the horses' heads, gives each one a pat. Then he mounts the stairs to the Tribunal.

ANGLE ON THE TRIBUNAL

439

Pilate stands waiting. An attendant brings him a laurel wreath which he holds as Ben Hur approaches and stands before him. Drusus and the other Romans regard Ben Hur sullenly. Pilate smiles.

PILATE

The Prince of Hur has won a greater prize than he knows. Visit me soon. I have an urgent message for you.

Pilate steps forward and places the wreath of victory on Ben Hur's head. The cheers of the crowd rise to a deafening climax.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE SHOT - MESSALA

440

He lies on a rough wooden bench, covered by his own toga. His battered face is contorted, wet with the sweat of his agony, but no groan or sound of pain escapes him.

MESSALA (slowly)

He will come...

WIDER ANGLE - INT. SMALL CHAMBER

441

Drusus bends over Messala. Several other Roman officers are present. A doctor is arranging surgical instruments and a pan of caustic on a small stool. The doctor selects some instruments and turns toward Messala.

DOCTOR

If you want us to keep you alive, we have to go to work now, Tribune. Do you understand?

MESSALA

To hack the legs off me -- not yet.

DOCTOR (to the others)

Hold him still.

They move to hold him.

MESSALA (struggling)

Not yet, I tell you, you damned loppers! Not till I've seen him. I don't receive him with half a body.

(he struggles up onto one elbow, looking off)

I told you, I told you, Drusus. Here he is!

They all turn.

WHAT THEY SEE

442

Ben Hur walks past the Roman officers and the doctor and stops at the bench, looking down at Messala.

MESSALA

Triumph complete, eh, Judah? The race won...the enemy destroyed.

BEN HUR

I see no enemy.

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MESSALA

What do you think you see? The smashed
body of a wretched animal? There is
enough of a man still left here for
you to hate.

442
CONT'D
(2)

With a great effort to speak and be free of the look
of pity in Ben Hur's eyes:

MESSALA

Let me help...you.

BEN HUR (in distress)

Messala!

MESSALA (in a choked whisper)

You think they're dead, your mother and
sister -- dead, and the race over. But
it isn't over, Judah. They're not dead.

BEN HUR (stunned, he goes on
his knees besides Messala to hear
his failing voice)

Where are they, Messala? Where are they?

MESSALA (with the last of his
strength)

Look for them in the Leper's Valley --
if you can recognize them. It goes on,
Judah. The race...isn't over.

A shudder passes over him. He is dead. The doctor
motions Ben Hur away and then, like a man broken, he
turns slowly and goes.

DISSOLVE TO:

ENTRANCE INTO THE ARENA

443X1

Ben Hur pauses in the archway leading into the arena.
He has changed out of his driving clothes.

The Circus is empty, except for a broken chariot.
A dog licks up blood.

BEN HUR (to himself)

There it is, Messala: there's the heart
of my victory. It has stopped beating.
--The world you've escaped from, Messala.
The world I still have to live in.

DISSOLVE TO:

VALLEY OF LEPERS

444

Ben Hur enters, stands looking into it as he had looked into the Circus.

WHAT HE SEES

445

Below him is the valley, bleak and barren, ringed by the stark bony hills. A dusty road runs through the low land, bisecting the valley. On this road, not far away, a few men are just finishing the task of unloading baskets of food from a dozen donkeys. Working swiftly and silently, eager to be quit of a distasteful task, they place the provisions on the roadside, return to the donkeys, lead them away.

CLOSE SHOT - BEN HUR

446

watching, apprehensively.

LONG SHOT OVER BEN HUR'S SHOULDERS

447

His glance follows the little band of townsmen as they hurry their donkeys toward the rocky defile which leads out of the Valley. After a moment he looks back along the road.

WHAT HE SEES

448

The Valley is as still as death. Then, suddenly, the ugly hills are swarming with the movement of many figures. From caves, from behind rocks, from wretched little hovels, come the lepers -- ragged, pitiful, some moving swiftly and purposefully, others in the last stages of the disease staggering painfully and slowly, but all making their way toward the food left by the roadside. Nearer and nearer they come, a ghastly legion of the living dead.

CLOSE SHOT - BEN HUR

449

He stares at the advancing lepers, shocked and revolted.

ANGLE TOWARD LEPERS

450

The stronger of the lepers reach the baskets first. Famished, they drop to their knees and begin to devour the food, while others stagger up behind them. Two men claim the same basket. With a hoarse cry, one strikes the other, and they struggle. The others pay no attention but continue to eat ravenously. While this goes on, Ben Hur comes slowly along the road, forcing himself to look at the lepers, fearing what he may find. A leper sees him and calls out warningly.

LEPER

Unclean! Unclean!

Ben Hur stops, sickened by the spectacle before him, exits.

DISSOLVE TO:

A STRETCH OF ROAD DEEPER IN THE VALLEY

451

Ben Hur walks along, his glance probing the rocky hills. He passes a man working a patch of earth with a wooden hoe, cultivating a few small plants. There is a little mud-walled hovel in the background. Ben Hur stops, calls at a distance.

BEN HUR

Man!

The man looks up, showing a ravaged face.

BEN HUR

I am searching for two women, a mother and daughter.

MAN

There are many women.

BEN HUR

Of the family of Hur.

MAN

We have no names here...only one: unclean.

Although impatient to go on with his search, Ben Hur is arrested for a moment, in pity and compassion for this man scratching away at his patch of ground.

BEN HUR (almost bitter cruelty)

What do you expect to grow here, in this dust and rock?

MAN

If it's only one leaf, it is something.
It is something that lives, not afraid
to touch me.

451
CONT'D
(2)

He turns back to his work. Ben Hur stands a moment,
then moves on in his search.

452 OUT

WHAT HE SEES

453

Esther and Malluch, carrying a basket of food, come
within sight of Ben Hur, from behind him. They are
horrified to see him there.

He hears them, turns; they move towards him. His
eyes take in the basket of food.

BEN HUR (indicating the basket)
For them?

ESTHER
Who told you they were here?

BEN HUR
A man who is dead.

ESTHER (pleading)
If you love them, go away from here:
don't see them.

BEN HUR
Do you think I can turn back now, as
though they didn't exist? Why did you
let me think they were dead?

ESTHER
It was what they wanted. You mustn't
betray this faith. Will you do this
for me?

BEN HUR (her urgent sincerity
touching him against his will)
Not to see them?

Malluch, who has moved away a little distance, watching
the valley, makes a sound of warning.

ESTHER (urgently)
They're coming. Judah, love them in the
way they most need to be loved. Not to
look at them. Judah, let it be as if
you had never come here.

Ben Hur hesitates, then kneels behind a rock as Esther moves
away. He lays his face against it, in an agony of will, his
eyes away from the direction in which she has gone.

WHAT ESTHER SEES

460

For another moment the path into the rocks is empty. Then the figure of a woman appears, her face mercifully hidden by a shawl. Another shawled figure follows her. They make their way down the path.

461 OUT

LONG SHOT - FROM BEN HUR'S ANGLE

462

The two lepers continue their descent. At a prudent distance from the road, they stop -- and wait. Esther takes up the basket, carries it across the road, puts it down, then retraces her steps.

The lepers wait until she has regained the other side of the road before they move toward the basket. There are no words, no greetings. The maneuver is accomplished with the silent understanding of people who have done the same thing many times.

CLOSE SHOT OF BEN HUR

462XI

his eyes shut, sweat on his forehead, as though in a fight of prayer to keep trust with Esther and not look at his mother and sister.

SHOT TOWARD THE LEPERS

463

Esther, in the foreground, watches as Miriam and Tirzah reach the basket. They start to pick it up, but Miriam pauses, tense, disturbed by some atavistic warning deep in her mother's heart. Her head turns toward the boulders which screen Ben Hur but she apparently sees nothing. She scans the rocks like an uneasy animal.

MIRIAM

Is Judah well? Is he happy?

ESTHER

Yes, he's well.

(a moment's hesitation)

Your mind can be at rest for him; he's well, Miriam.

CLOSE SHOT BEN HUR

463X1

His head buried in his knees.

MED. SHOT

463X2

Miriam picks up the basket. For an instant she looks toward Esther, then turns away, speaking faintly as she does so.

MIRIAM

God be with you.

The two hooded figures go painfully up the path, carrying the basket between them.

CLOSE SHOT

463X3

Ben Hur's head turns, his eyes open and he looks: horror and unbearable pain takes him. His head falls back to the rock.

MED. SHOT

463X4

Esther, who has stood watching the lepers go, turns and goes to where Ben Hur is hiding.

ESTHER

They have gone. We can go back.

He looks up at her, a gathering fury in his eyes. He rises.

BEN HUR

Go back. To what!

ESTHER (pleading)

They have one blessing left: to think you remember them as they were, and live your own life. Forget what is here.

BEN HUR (a sudden anger
choking him)

Forget! Forget what is here?
It's as though they were alive
in a grave!

ESTHER (desperately)
Oh Judah, what can you do?

463X4
CONT'D
(2)

BEN HUR (mercilessly)
Undo what you've done. How could you
have suffered them to come here?
(he turns and moves towards
the leper caves)
I shall take them out of this valley.

ESTHER (she gets in front
of him)
They will be stoned, they will be
killed!

He pushes her aside. She cries "Judah!" Malluch
tries to stop him and he, too, is pushed aside.

ESTHER (crying out)
Think what you're doing, Judah! It
will tear them apart if they see you!

He stops, stares down into the valley, turns and walks
past Esther and Malluch on the road to Jerusalem.
They follow him.

DISSOLVE:

MED. SHOT ROAD - SLOPE OF A HILL IN BACKGROUND

464

As Ben Hur, Esther and Malluch walk in dreadful
silence along the road, they see a crowd moving
across it, making their way to a hillside. Beside
the road a spring flows from a rock. Ben Hur is
impatient to get through the crowd. Suddenly he
is caught by the sleeve. It is Balthasar.

BALTHASAR

Judah!

Ben Hur stops, he reacts to Balthasar's excitement.
The crowd moves on towards the hillside, leaving
Balthasar alone with Ben Hur, Esther and Malluch.

BALTHASAR (radiant)

He is here, Judah. I have found
Him. The Child has become a Man:
the Man, I know it now, is the Son
of God.

Esther, moved by Balthasar's words, turns to where
the crowd is now beginning to sit on the distant
hillside to listen to Christ, whose back is towards
us.

Ben Hur
Chgs.

10-15-58 P.188

BALTHASAR
The promise was true.

464
CONT'D
(2)

BEN HUR (bitterly)
Happy Balthasar. Life has
answered you, has it?

BALTHASAR
Life has been answered. God has
answered it.

Esther walks closer to where Christ is standing.
She is followed by Malluch.

BALTHASAR (looks deeply into
Ben Hur's eyes)
You seem to be walking this road with
a great sorrow. Leave the road for a
moment; come with me and listen.

BEN HUR
When the Romans were marching me
to the galleys, thirst had nearly
killed me. But a man gave me water
to drink and I went on living.
(harshly)
I should have done better if I'd pour-
ed it into the sand. I'm thirsty still.

Ben Hur turns to spring, cups water in his hands
and drinks. He looks at setting sun.

BEN HUR
It will be dark soon. I've business
with Rome.

He turns back to the road. Balthasar watches
him go.

BALTHASAR (in a sorrow of
(disappointment)
You insist on death. Goodbye, Judah.

Ben Hur looks at where Esther and Malluch are
standing listening to Christ, pauses a moment,
and then walks on towards Jerusalem.

CLOSE SHOT

464X1

Of Esther: She is looking up, oblivious of all else,
towards Christ, who has not yet started to speak to
the crowd, but speaks quietly to those beside him
while the crowd settle on the hillside.

DISSOLVE

EXT. BEN HUR COURTYARD

465

Ben Hur reaches the door of his house. He instinctively puts out his hand to touch the Mesusah. It is not there. He opens the door and goes into the interior courtyard.

INT. COURTYARD

465X1

As he enters a Roman Officer rises to his feet. Simonides is sitting in anxious silence: he looks sharply across at Ben Hur as he enters. Ben Hur looks from the officer to two Roman soldiers who are standing near. The Officer moves forward a few paces. His manner is respectful as he addresses Ben Hur.

OFFICER

The Governor invites you to accompany me to his presence.

BEN HUR (looking at the escort)

You mean commands me, Captain.

OFFICER

Sir, with respect.

Ben Hur moves with the Romans to the door, and then turns back to Simonides.

BEN HUR

Simonides: you once said to me that when one purpose fails, it is good to have another. You were right.

Simonides looks at Ben Hur with a new excitement.

SIMONIDES

They have not told me why you must go to Pilate, - I shall be waiting.

Ben Hur looks at Simonides for a moment: there is understanding between them. Then he turns and goes with the soldiers.

DISSOLVE

PRAETORIAN HALL - INT. THE GOVERNOR'S PALACE - NIGHT

466

This is a vaulted chamber with the tribunal of the governor on a dais at one end and under a gilded Roman eagle. Pilate, alone, is reading a scroll. A servant's voice announces.

SERVANT'S VOICE

The Prince of Hur.

Pilate comes down from his dais, goes to meet him.

466
CONT'D
(2)

BEN-HUR

You sent for me.

PILATE

I hope I bring you a good conclusion to your victory. I have a message for you from the Consul, your father.

BEN-HUR

I honour him.

PILATE

As you may honour yourself. You have been made a citizen of Rome.
(after a pause)
Do you say nothing to this?

BEN-HUR

I have just come from a valley of stone, where my mother and sister live what's left of their lives: by Rome's will, lepers, outcasts, without hope.

PILATE

I have heard this. There was great blame there; very deeply regretted.

BEN-HUR

Their flesh is mine, my Lord Pilate, it already carries Rome's mark.

PILATE

Messala is dead. What he did has had its way with him.

BEN-HUR (with cold,
deadly anger)

The deed was not Messala's. I knew him well before the cruelty of Rome spread in his blood. Rome destroyed Messala as surely as Rome has destroyed my family.

PILATE (a quiet
reasonableness)

Where there is greatness -- great government, or power -- even great feeling or compassion -- error, also, is great. We progress and mature by fault. But Rome has said she is ready to join your life to hers in a great future.

BEN-HUR

There are other voices.

466
CONT'D
(3)

PILATE

The voice, for instance, of Arrius, waiting for you in Rome. He would tell you, if I may speak in his place, not to crucify yourself on a shadow such as old resentment or impossible loyalties. Perfect freedom has no existence. The grown man knows the world he lives in. And for the present, the world is Rome. Young Arrius, I am sure, will choose it.

BEN-HUR

I am Judah Ben-Hur.

PILATE

I crossed this floor and spoke in friendship as I would speak to Arrius, but when I go up those stairs, I become the hand of Caesar, ready to crush all those who challenge his authority. There are too many small men of envy and ambition who try to disrupt the government of Rome. Even the godmongers are becoming subversive, like this poor fellow from Nazareth, setting himself up as King of the Jews. - This disaffection has come very close to you. You have become the victor and hero to these people. They will look to you, their one true god, as I called you. If you stay here, you will find yourself part of this tragedy.

BEN-HUR

I am already part of this tragedy.
(he takes the ring off his
finger)

Return this to Arrius. I honour
him too well to wear it any longer.

Pilate takes the ring, looks at it and back at Ben-Hur, then goes up the steps to the dais. When he speaks, his voice is impersonal.

PILATE

Even for the sake of Arrius, I
can't protect you from personal
disaster if you stay here.
You're too great a danger. Leave
Judea. You have my warning.

466
CONT'D
(4)

A slight pause, while they face each other. Then
Ben-Hur bows abruptly and goes.

DISSOLVE:

CLOSE SHOT - ESTHER - NIGHT

467

The roof of the House of Hur. Esther is watching
restlessly, despondently. Suddenly the shadow goes
from her face.

MEDIUM SHOT - EXT. COURTYARD

468

Ben-Hur opens the gate and walks toward the house.

MED. SHOT - ROOF

469

Esther turns and runs to the stairs. Quickly, eagerly she runs down the steps.

INT. HOUSE

470

Ben Hur enters. Esther stops at the foot of the stairs.

ESTHER

Judah! Judah --

Esther comes from the stairs with joy and relief. Ben Hur has glanced up, and for a moment we see on his face a tenderness for her.

ESTHER

Judah! I was afraid you would never come back, afraid of what would happen to you. But I see you again!

BEN HUR (avoiding her eyes)

Your father is waiting for me. Where is he?

ESTHER (quickly)

Whatever you have in your mind to do it is like a blind man fighting in a crowd, not knowing where he strikes.
(then with compassion as she sees his extreme weariness)

Rest, sleep. For a few hours of the night let your mind be at peace.

BEN HUR (in a sudden bitter anger)

At peace! Do you think I don't long for it as much as you do? Where do you see it?

ESTHER (a wonder in her voice)

If you had heard this man from Nazareth --

BEN HUR (in dismissal)

Balthasar's world!

ESTHER

He is more than Balthasar's world: His voice travelled with such a still purpose, it was more than a voice - a man more than a man.

(slowly, awed by this experience)
He said "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God".

BEN HUR

Children of God in that dead valley
where we've left them?

(he moves away as though to leave
her: then turns to her.)

I tell you, Esther, every man of
Judea is unclean, and will stay
unclean, until we've scoured off
our bodies the crust and filth of
being at the mercy of tyranny. No
other life is possible, except to
wash this land clean!

ESTHER

In blood?

BEN HUR

Yes, in blood!

ESTHER (quietly, firmly)

I know there's a law in life, that
blood gets more blood, as dog be-
gets dog; death generates death,
as vulture breeds the vulture. But
the voice of Jesus of Nazareth I
heard today on the hill said "Love
your enemy Do good to those
who despitefully use you."

BEN HUR

And all who are born in this land
hereafter can suffer as we have done.

ESTHER

As you make us do now.

(pause)

Are we to bear nothing together?
Even love!

BEN HUR (unable to deny his
love any longer)

I can hardly draw a breath without
feeling you in my heart: yet I know
that everything I do from this moment
will be as great a pain to you as you
have ever suffered.

(coldly)

It is better not to love me.

ESTHER (angry at his attempt
to destroy them)
It was Judah Ben Hur I loved. What
has become of him? You seem to be
now the very thing you set out to
destroy: giving evil for evil.
Hatred is turning you to stone. It's
as though you had become Messala!

470
CONT'D.
(3)

He turns on her in amazement and pain: his love breaks
his resolution. He goes to her, takes her in his arms,
kisses her passionately, and violently. Then, as sud-
denly, he lets her go, and starts up the stairs.

ESTHER
Judah! Judah! What do you mean
to do?

BEN HUR (pauses)
I am under Pilate's orders to leave
Judea. I'm going out beyond Bethany,
where the people are preparing to
join against Rome.

He continues up the stairs.

CLOSE SHOT

470X1

Esther watches him out of sight, in despair.

DISSOLVE:

471 to 476 OUT

THE SHEIK'S TENT

476X1

The Sheik, a dozen tribesmen chieftains, and Ben Hur have
come to the end of a feast. The Sheik and the chieftans
in high, fierce spirits. They belch with great satis-
faction.

SHEIK
Praise the world! Food in our bellies,
unity in our hearts. Now we can look
ahead to the days destroying tyranny,
the bright figure of the future! -
Here, beside me, is the voice and metal
of Judea, already crowned victor over
Rome. He is going into Jerusalem:
the days of silent preparation are
nearly over, and the city and the
desert will rise in one sudden storm.

He rises, hurls his dagger, its point into the carpet on the floor.

476X1
CONT'D.
(2)

SHEIK

Mark your allegiance!

The chieftains rise and cast their daggers in a circle around the Sheik's.

SHEIK

When he returns, be ready. Sleep beside your swords.

The chieftains break up, loud with delighted threats against Rome, and leave the tent. Ben Hur looks after them in silence, fingering his slave ring.

SHEIK (with relish)

The earth has a finer savour tonight than any time since you showed my horses shining to the world: with Messala overthrown, dragged in the dust, and dead. Isn't it so?

(He studies Ben Hur.)

Tell me your mind.

BEN HUR (intensely)

Is Messala dead? He told me the race wasn't over. And I know it. I can feel how he still crowds me.

The Sheik looks at him sharply. Ben Hur turns away. When he speaks it is with a feeling of pain.

BEN HUR

Ilderim, there is a valley which all our confidence and purpose can't win back into life.

SHEIK

What sort of fear is this Judah?

BEN HUR

It may be there is preparation for another rising, greater than this one we have put our hands to. She believes it.

SHEIK (puzzled)

A woman?

BEN HUR

Am I to destroy her, Ilderim?

476X1
CONT'D.
(3)

SHEIK (now shocked)

A woman?

BEN HUR

It is Esther. Tonight when I go
to Jerusalem I shall find her there.
But how far from me?

SHEIK

In the name of your one God, what is
shaking the great spirit that was in
you?

Ben Hur turns and looks down to the circle of daggers.
He draws his own dagger and casts it quivering among
them.

DISSOLVE:

477 OUT

VALLEY OF THE LEPERS - EARLY MORNING

478

Esther stands waiting. For a moment the valley is
deserted and quiet. Then the hooded figure of Miriam
appears, coming slowly and painfully down the path,
stopping at a prudent distance from the road. Esther
crosses the road and climbs toward Miriam.

MIRIAM

No further! What are you doing here?

ESTHER (coming closer)

I was here last evening, waiting for
you. I've waited all through the
night. What has happened? Where
is Tirzah?

MIRIAM (almost a cry)

Leave the food!

SHOT OF BEN HUR

479

He has come cautiously to behind the rock where he hid before. From here he listens to Esther speaking. Seeing for the first time his mother a leper shakes his whole being.

CLOSE SHOT - ESTHER AND MIRIAM

480

ESTHER (going nearer to Miriam)
I have heard him again, this man from Nazareth. If ever words were from God they are in everything he says. Miriam - how can I tell you - It's a voice so strong it seems to make life live again.

CLOSE UP OF BEN HUR

481

He watches, deeply moved by what he sees and hears.

CLOSE SHOT - MIRIAM AND ESTHER

482

ESTHER
Come with me, Miriam, you and Tirzah, you must come with me. Let me take you to where he is.

MIRIAM
Tirzah is dying. Leave the food and go.

Esther's hopes are crushed by this; she feels she has failed in what she came to do with such hope and faith.

Miriam is about to go, but stops.

LONGER SHOT

483

Miriam is looking past her into the valley. Ben Hur is coming toward them.

MIRIAM (shocked, to Esther)
It's Judah! Why did you tell him?

Esther is at first horrified to see him there.
Then her mood changes.

483
CONT'D
(2)

ESTHER (needing his help)
Yes, Judah, yes.

Ben Hur climbs toward them. His emotion propels him forward. Miriam creeps back.

MIRIAM
No nearer, please God, no nearer.

BEN HUR
Wait, mother, wait!

Miriam continues to draw back.

BEN HUR
Let me talk to you. Let me see Tirzah.

ESTHER
Tirzah is dying.
(pleading)
We can't leave them here. In Jerusalem,
if they can see this man from Nazareth,
they will know life is more than this
valley of the dead.

Ben Hur looks at her intently. She scrambles up the rock towards Miriam.

MIRIAM
Esther!

Miriam has tried to go, but she is too weak and sinks down. Esther goes to her and puts her arm across her shoulders, looking down at Ben Hur.

ESTHER (to Miriam)
To hear life speaking, Miriam.

Ben Hur has watched her, at first with an instinct of alarm that she would be risking infection. But quickly this changes to wonder and admiration at her courage. He climbs up beside them, convinced by her action.

ESTHER
This is how it must be, Judah.

BEN HUR (nods)
Where is Tirzah?

MIRIAM (pleading)
No, Judah, don't go to her. Oh, dear
son!
(calling, now hopelessly, after him)
Judah!

483
CONT'D
(3)

Ben Hur goes into the dark of a cave.

MIRIAM
I'm afraid.

ESTHER
No cause.
(simply, as a matter of complete fact)
The world is more than we know.

DISSOLVE

MED. SHOT

484

Beside the stream, where Esther and Ben Hur met
Balthasar. Ben Hur is carrying Tirzah. Esther helps
Miriam along the uneven path. Ben Hur puts Tirzah
on to the ground.

BEN HUR
We can rest here.

As Esther helps Miriam to sit at the side of the stream,
Ben Hur goes and fetches water in his hands for Tirzah.

ESTHER (to Miriam)
In a little while you will see Him.
He is in Jerusalem now, for the
Passover.

MIRIAM
How can we go into the city? We
shall be stoned.

Esther puts her hand reassuringly on Miriam's arm, and
looks up toward the hill where she heard Christ. Ben
Hur looks up from giving Tirzah the water, sees where
Esther is looking. She looks at Ben Hur and sees that
he understands what is in her thoughts. She smiles
at him.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. JOPPA GATE - DAY

485

Ben Hur carrying Tirzah, Esther helping Miriam, pass through the gate and pause when they see the deserted streets, deserted except for an occasional old man, or woman in a window or at a doorway, and a few children.

BEN HUR

What has happened. The city is almost deserted.

ESTHER

Perhaps He is at the Temple. The people have gone there.

As they walk on Ben Hur calls across to an old woman in a doorway.

BEN HUR

Where are the people? What is happening?

The woman sees Miriam and Tirzah, gives a startled cry of "Unclean", picks up a small child and goes indoors, shutting the door behind her. Other people hear her cry. Heads appear at windows. A door opens and a man comes out. A few other men look up and start to pick up stones to drive the lepers out of the city. One throws a stone. Another cries: "Away! Unclean!" Miriam shrinks away, and Esther moves between her and the people. Other stones are thrown, one striking Ben Hur's shoulder as he carries Tirzah. They quicken their steps and pass into a sideway and out into a deserted street.

MEDIUM SHOT - SIDE STREET

486

Esther, Ben Hur, Tirzah and Miriam move on down the street. An old man on his steps, seeing the lepers, picks up a small child and goes indoors, shutting the door behind him.

AN ANGLE FROM BEHIND THEM

487

Sitting in the entrance to a house is a blind beggar. Ben Hur walks towards him. The beggar, hearing the footsteps, turns his head swiftly.

BEGGAR

Alms for the blind!

BEN HUR

Why are the streets deserted?

Ben Hur
Chgs.

10-29-58 P.200A

BEGGAR

They have gone to the trial. Alms for
the blind.

487
CONT'D
(2)

BEN HUR

Whose trial?

BEGGAR

The young Rabbi from Nazareth. They're
wanting his death.

ESTHER (dismayed)

It can't be true...

BEGGAR
They're mad for his blood.

487
CONT'D
(3)

BEN HUR
Why? What has he done?

BEGGAR
Nothing I know of.
(pleadingly)
For the blind, for the blind!
Help for the blind!

Ben Hur puts a coin in his bowl. He stands a moment,
then they move on.

DISSOLVE:

MEDIUM SHOT - BEN HUR AND THE WOMEN - STREET NEAR
THE CASTLE OF ANTONIO

488

Their attention is caught by the sound of the mob.
They stare down the street towards the approaching
crowd -- above which can be seen the head of a cross -
appalled by what they see.

A flood of humanity pours into the street, filling it
from wall to wall.

The mob rushes forward, then parts, making way for a
mounted Roman Centurion in full uniform. He rides
grimly down the street, followed by soldiers heavily
armed. The crowd follows, some mocking and hooting,
others lamenting, or looking on in sad silence.

MAN (derisively)
Hail, King of the Jews!

CLOSE SHOT

489

Ben Hur and Esther draw Miriam and Tirzah into a
recess of the street, protected from the oncoming
crowd by the corner of a house.

ANGLE FROM BEHIND BEN HUR

490

Shows, over the heads of the soldiers and the people, in terrible silhouette, a wooden cross, carried by a man who cannot be seen through the crowd. It is carried slowly, laboriously, and is followed by two crosses carried by two other men.

CLOSE SHOT OF BEN HUR

491

As he looks at Christ. He remembers his journey to the galleys and the cup of water.

BEN HUR (with wonder)

I know this man!

Miriam, Tirzah and Esther look at Ben Hur, arrested by the wonder in his voice. They follow him with their eyes as he forces his way into the crowd.

ESTHER (bewildered)

How can this be?

TIRZAH

Is this Jesus of Nazareth? What has he done?

At this moment Christ stumbles and falls under the weight of the cross. The women give a cry. Miriam and Tirzah, forgetting their weakness, move out into the street, Esther with them. Their faces show great compassion.

Some of the crowd nearest to them set up a cry of "Unclean! Stand back! Keep away from them!"

The crowd between them and the cross presses away, leaving a clear circle round them.

MIRIAM (desperately)

Will someone help him?

ESTHER (looking with anguish

at the faces of the soldiers)

Have pity on him!

MIRIAM (marvelling)

In His pain -- this look of peace...

The shadow of the cross falls across their faces as it moves away. They turn back to their hiding place, and the crowd goes past them.

Ben Hur breaks through the crowd.

TIRZAH (in awe and pity)
We were close beside him. I thought
I could hear his heart.

491
CONT'D
(2)

CLOSE SHOT OF THE WOMEN

standing as we left them, watching the disappearing
mob.

TIRZAH (in sudden amazement)
I can stand, Esther, easily stand.

Esther and Miriam look with wonder at Tirzah's renewed
strength.

MIRIAM (turning to Esther)
We must go back.

ESTHER (deeply distressed)
I brought you here, to this, when I
hoped...

MIRIAM (with a sudden deep con-
viction)
You haven't failed.

As they turn away --

DISSOLVE TO:

SHOT OF BEN HUR

492X1

Taking a gourd of water to Christ. It is knocked out
of his hand by a soldier.

DISSOLVE TO:

HILL AT CALVARY OUTSIDE JERUSALEM

493

The cross is being raised from the ground and planted
in the earth. It is a scene of extreme labour and
effort: workmen in leather hauling on ropes; spades
which have dug the earth. And yet, as the cross
carrying its suffering, reaches its final position,
and the ropes are unloosed, it seems to stand against
the sky like an established victory.

SHADOW OF THE CROSS

494

The shadow of the cross falls down the hill, first to the feet of a group of silent mourning women, and then further to where, among a crowd of onlookers, Ben Hur, in desperate sorrow, has found Balthasar.

BEN HUR

This is where your search has brought you, Balthasar.

BALTHASAR (as though reconciling himself to what he sees)
To this end he was born; for this cause he came into the world.

BEN HUR

For this death?

BALTHASAR

And this beginning.
(the sorrow bears down on him)
I have lived too long.

DISSOLVE TO:

SHOT OF CROSSES

494X1

The cross on which hangs the First Thief who turns his head in angry despair towards Christ and calls out "If you are Christ, save yourself and us!"

And from the furthest cross the Second Thief calls: "Lord, remember me when you come into your Kingdom."

The knotted, tortured face and body of this Second Thief becomes more tranquil, as though he heard Christ's answer, unheard by us: "This day you will be with me in Paradise."

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE SHOT OF BEN HUR

494X2

Who has heard this interchange. This extraordinary trust of the Second Thief affirms his own growing belief.

DISSOLVE TO:

ESTHER, MIRIAM AND TIRZAH ON THE ROAD TOWARDS
THE VALLEY OF THE LEPERS

495

The women walk in silence. Then Miriam pauses as though to rest, turning her head a little in the direction from which they have come.

MIRIAM (her thoughts taking words)
As though he were carrying in that cross the pain of the world.

495
CONT'D
(2)

ESTHER
Here we can rest: the shadow of the storm: we can shelter here.

TIRZAH
The light is gone from the sun.

MIRIAM
A strange darkness!

TIRZAH
But still day.

ESTHER
And the earth is shaken: the sky hidden.

MIRIAM
His life over.

A flash of lightning illumines their faces. Esther gives a gasp as she sees Miriam and Tirzah. Their faces are clear of disease.

ESTHER
Miriam.....!

Miriam looks at her. But is is dark again.

ESTHER
I thought...

Thunder drowns her voice. A fierce rain is falling, as though to wash away the deed of the crucifixion.

Another flash, for a moment holding them in broad daylight. Esther can see that Miriam and Tirzah are cured.

ESTHER
Do you see your hand?

In the last flickering of the lightning they look at their hands.

CLOSE SHOT
of their hands, feeling the smooth, clear skin.

496

MEDIUM SHOT OF THE THREE WOMEN

497

The light gradually returns. The women look at one another, unable to believe the truth. They move out onto the road. The rain has stopped. Points of light flash out from the wet leaves as they stand looking at the sky.

DISSOLVE TO:

CALVARY

498

Few people are left on the hill, which is now shining in the light after the rain. Ben Hur is still standing there, as though almost unconscious of where he is. He turns from the hill and moves slowly towards the city.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE SHOT OF ESTHER

499

who waits at the top of the stairs of the House of Hur, watching Ben Hur mount the stairs towards her.

500 OUT

INT. COURT

501

As Ben Hur reaches the top of the stairs, Esther comes out to him. There is a moment without words.

Compassionately she moves to him.

BEN HUR

Almost at the moment He died, I heard him say "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do".

ESTHER

Even then.

BEN HUR

Even then. And I felt His voice take the sword out of my hand.

Ben Hur
Chgs.

10-29-58 P.205A

EXT. COURTYARD OF BEN HUR'S HOME

499

Ben Hur enters, goes to door of house. He stares down at the ground.

CLOSE SHOT - BEN HUR - IN DOORWAY

500

He stoops over and picks up something in the flower bed. It is the Mesusah which he had thrown away in despair so long ago. After a moment he reaches out and replaces it by the door. He touches the Mesusah, kisses his fingers, then enters house.

INT. COURT

501

Ben Hur comes in.

ESTHER'S VOICE

Judah...

He turns, looking up at Esther who stands at the foot of stairs. There is a moment without words.

BEN HUR

He is dead, Esther.

Compassionately she moves down to him.

BEN HUR

Almost at the moment He died,
I heard Him say 'Father, forgive
them, for they know not what they
do.'

ESTHER

Even then.

BEN HUR

Even then. And I felt His voice
take the sword out of my hand.

After a moment of silence he looks around.

ESTHER

They are waiting for you.

Together they mount the stairs.

ROOF

502

As they step onto the roof, Ben Hur stands for a moment, amazed and with a growing joy.

AN ANGLE OVER HIS SHOULDER

503

Miriam and Tirzah are there, clean and unblemished. Simonides and Malluch watch in the background. An overwhelming silence between them.

MIRIAM

He has died.

(finding words with
difficulty)

We're no longer in the valley.

Ben Hur catches her in his arms. Tirzah comes beside him. He touches her face, marvelling.

GROUP SHOT - ON THE ROOF

504

Ben Hur, Miriam and Tirzah look out into the night.

Esther moves instinctively to Ben Hur's side. He puts his arm around her.

Above the rooftops the last faint smouldering of the day hangs over the hills. A few voices call to each other in the streets. Lights come up in the windows.

CAMERA PANS TO SKY

A voice is heard, the voice first heard at the beginning:

VOICE

"These things I have spoken unto
you, that in me ye have peace.
In the world ye shall have
tribulation: but be of good
cheer; I have overcome the
world."

FADE OUT

THE END

From: Karl Tunberg

Ben Hur
Retakes

6-3-59

Ben Hur is kneeling. Esther moves close to him,
puts her hand on his shoulder.

Insert
XXX483

ESTHER

Judah - the words of Jesus (of
Nazareth) gave me a glimpse of what
is on the other side of death. It
is nothing to fear if you have
faith.

(a pause)

I will take them to Him.

She turns away, moving toward Miriam.

BEN HUR (seeing what she is
about to do)

Esther - No!

From: Karl Tunberg

Ben Hur
Retakes

6-3-59

BEN HUR

XXX295

Only if I can give up thinking
and feeling. And that time
hasn't come.

ESTHER

What will happen? Judah -
I'm afraid! This time you
won't go to the galleys.
This time you'll be destroyed -
you'll die!

She sobs. He takes her in his arms, comfort-
ing her.

BEN HUR (bitterly)

The stone that fell from this
roof so long ago is still falling -
still smashing lives -

DISSOLVE TO:

BEN HUR

Children of God in that dead
valley where we've left them?

XXX470

ESTHER

Yes - even there! Judah, if only
you could have heard Him. He
asks the afflicted to come to Him.

BEN HUR (ironically)

And will He heal them?

ESTHER

They say He can - but this I know -
He will give them comfort and hope.

BEN HUR

Hope! I tell you - every man of Judea
is unclean, and will stay unclean,
until we've scoured off our bodies
the crust and filth of being at the
mercy of tyranny. No other life is
possible, except to wash this land
clean!

ESTHER

In blood?

BEN HUR

Yes, in blood!

ESTHER

I know there's a law in life, that
blood gets more blood, as dog be-
gets dog; death generates death,
as vulture breeds the vulture. But
the voice of Jesus of Nazareth I
heard today on the hill said "Love
your enemy ... Do good to those who
despitefully use you."

BEN HUR

And all who are born in this land
hereafter can suffer as we have done.

ESTHER

As you make us do now.

(pause)

Are we to bear nothing together?
Even love!

BEN HUR (unable to deny
his love any longer)
I can hardly draw a breath without
feeling you in my heart!

XXX4-70
CONT'D
(2)

ESTHER
Oh, Judah -

BEN HUR
I've loved you since the first
time I saw you -

ESTHER
Judah - don't go away from me
again! This time you'll be
destroyed! You'll die!

BEN HUR (harshly, almost
brutally)
I cannot change my course! And
the things I must do from this
moment will bring you nothing
but pain and suffering.
(bitterly)
It is better not to love me.

She stares at him through tears.

ESTHER
I don't. It was Judah Ben Hur I
loved. What has become of him?
You seem to be now the very thing
you set out to destroy: Giving evil
for evil. Hatred is turning you to
stone. It's as though you had become
Messala!

There is a moment without words.

ESTHER
I've lost you, Judah -
She turns her back on him and leaves.

CLOSE SHOT - BEN HUR

XXX4-70XA1

Shaken by what she has said, a prey to inner
conflicts, he looks after her.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE SHOT

226X1

He crouches by the hatch, looking around.

226X2
OUT

ANGLE TOWARD AFTER-DECK (BLUE BACKING)

227

Near the rail Arrius is fighting with two Macedonians, backing up slowly before the unequal odds.

ANGLE TOWARD BEN HUR

228

He sees Arrius. He moves toward the center of the deck, picks up a spear.

ANGLE TOWARD ARRIUS

229

With deft swordsmanship, Arrius disposes of one of his enemies. The second enemy advances, sword raised, but at that moment a spear stabs into him. He falls to the deck. Arrius has time to look off and see Ben Hur before he turns to meet two more Macedonians. Arrius runs his sword through one of them, but the other strikes the Roman a heavy blow, knocking him overboard. The Macedonian turns, seeing Ben Hur coming toward him. Ben Hur seizes a flaming torch from a stanchion, and jams it into the Macedonian's face. With a SCREAM, the man falls, writhed in agony.

Suddenly Ben Hur dives overboard.

ANGLE IN WATER

230

Ben Hur lands in water full of debris, smoking embers, broken oars, drowning men. He spots Arrius, struggling to keep afloat. Instinctively he has grasped a piece of driftwood. Ben Hur swims to Arrius just as he loses his grasp on the driftwood and sinks. Ben Hur, near exhaustion himself, grabs Arrius underwater, manages to maneuver him onto the piece of driftwood. He starts swimming away from the side of Arrius' galley - pushing Arrius and the piece of driftwood.

CLOSE SHOT - ARRIUS AND BEN HUR

230X1

Ben Hur has added a piece to his make-shift raft.
He looks off to -

ARRIUS' GALLEY

230X2

It is ablaze and starting to list.

CLOSE ON BEN HUR AND ARRIUS

230X3

Arrius stirs, partially regaining consciousness. He looks dazedly PAST CAMERA.

GALLEY - RAFT IN FOREGROUND (BLUE BACKING)

230X4

We see over Ben Hur and Arrius, the ship sink slowly into her grave. Arrius collapses into unconsciousness.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OPEN SEA (BLUE BACKING)

231

Ben Hur has hoisted the unconscious Roman up on a fragment of the deck and is maneuvering his improvised raft away from the battle, which can still be seen in the distance. Laboriously Ben Hur pulls himself up on the raft beside the Roman.

He sees the Roman's sword belt. He removes it, starts to fix it securely around Arrius' arm.

DISSOLVE TO:

LONG SHOT - EXT. OPEN SEA - EARLY MORNING

232

It is calmer now. The raft floats peacefully, with the figures of Arrius and Ben Hur sprawled motionless on it.

CLOSER SHOT - THE RAFT

233

Ben Hur lies face downward with the still figure of Arrius beside him. The sword belt around Arrius' wrist -- the other end of it strapped to Ben Hur's arm. Presently the Roman stirs, opens his eyes, struggles to a sitting position. The movement rouses Ben Hur, who also sits up. The Roman's eyes go to the belt which holds them together. For a moment they float in silence.

ARRIUS (with an effort)
Why did you save me?

BEN HUR
Why did you have me unchained?

There is a moment without words. Arrius smiles ruefully.

233
CONT'D
(2)

ARRIUS

Let me die.

Again there is silence. Arrius' glance goes to his dagger in its sheath on his sword belt. He reaches out his free hand, draws the dagger, starts to sever the belt. Ben Hur stops him.

ARRIUS (brokenly)

Once I had a son. He didn't grow to be as high as my sword.

(harshly)

If he were here in your place, he would let me die.

The Roman stares at the slave's unyielding face. After a moment the dagger drops from Arrius' fingers.

Suddenly Ben Hur pulls himself to a sitting posture; he scans the horizon. His lips are cracked, his face gaunt.

234 OUT
235 OUT

WHAT HE SEES

236

Far off, a mere dot on the horizon, is a ship.

CLOSE SHOT ON RAFT

237

Arrius stirs, lifts his head, looking in the direction Ben Hur is staring.

ARRIUS (labored)

I can't see clearly. Is the sail square?

BEN HUR

I can't tell.

ARRIUS (ironically)

If it is an enemy, my wish will be granted.

Ben Hur watches tensely.

BEN HUR

It is a Roman sail.

Arrius watches the approaching ship. New life seems to flow through him.

DISSOLVE TO:

ANGLE ON THE DECK OF A ROMAN GALLEY

238

Arrius is being helped over the rail by sailors who put a blanket around him. Behind the consul other sailors are helping Ben Hur aboard.

The whole ship's company is gathered on the foredeck at attention. A TRUMPET SOUNDS, and the captain of the galley comes forward and embraces Arrius.

CAPTAIN

Welcome, consul! We had given up hope of you.

ARRIUS

And the battle?

CAPTAIN

We lost ten galleys, but your plan was victorious. The Pirate fleet was broken.

Arrius turns toward Ben Hur who stands near the rail.

ARRIUS (smiles)

It would seem that in his eagerness to save you, your God has also saved the Roman fleet.

(then more personally)

Some debts are impossible to repay. But I would like to try. Come with me to Rome.

Ben Hur looks into the Roman's eyes. He smiles. Arrius puts his arm around Ben Hur's shoulder. They move away together.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PALATINE PALACE - ROME - DAY

239

Framed in one of the great arches, the victory parade honoring Arrius' triumphant homecoming can be seen crossing the vast concourse in front of the palace. It is a martial display of cavalry, marines, foot soldiers with eagles and banners aloft, paced by the MUSIC of FLUTES and TRUMPETS.

CLOSER SHOT - SHOOTING UPWARD FROM A LOW ANGLE

240

Marching steadily, the might of Rome comes right AT THE CAMERA. It is a dazzling display, banks of polished shields, bristling forests of spears, plumed helmets nodding. Suddenly there is a deafening CHEER as two mounted men have appeared. One is Arrius, the other

BEN HUR (nods)
But my inner loyalty is the same as
yours. Arrius understands that.

294
CONT'D
(2)

SIMONIDES (with a shrewd look
at Ben Hur)
Even if you were to strike at the Emperor?

Ben Hur gives him a sharp look.

BEN HUR
What do you mean?

SIMONIDES
I see that your one thought is to find your
mother and sister. But suppose that isn't
possible. If one purpose fails, it is good
to have another. And that purpose could be
the liberation of your people.

BEN HUR
I haven't yet failed in my first purpose.

SIMONIDES (very tense - the
practical propagandist)
All over our nation people are banding to-
gether. All the desert people who have
reason to hate Rome are gathering into an
invisible army. Soon they will strike at
Rome.

Simonides' violence takes Ben Hur by surprise.

BEN HUR
And you are part of this?

SIMONIDES (his voice rising)
Yes. With every agony of the rack I swore
to help this army. The Romans confiscated
everything of yours they could find. There
were things they could not find. Most of
your fortune is safe, Judah. I hope you
will use it as I would -- to buy us our
freedom.

BEN HUR (a pause)
No, Simonides. That is not why I came
back.

SIMONIDES
Judah, they are dead! Five years -- five
years! No one could live so long in the
dungeons. I know! I was in them!

BEN HUR
Who lives more than one year
in the galleys?

294
CONT'D
(3)

There is a moment of silence.

SIMONIDES (finally)
Even if they live, what can you do?
Tear down the citadel, stone by stone?
No. The secrets behind those stones
will remain secrets until the Romans
are driven into the sea.

Ben Hur hesitates, looks at Esther, and abruptly changes
the conversation.

BEN HUR (with a smile)
My old room, does it still exist?

ESTHER
It has always been ready.

SIMONIDES
You may find it a little altered...
like the rest of us...
(smiles through his tears)
I should like to laugh, Judah. Let
us laugh again.

BEN HUR (smiles)
Yes, Simonides. We will laugh.

SIMONIDES
There will be joy again in this house
tonight. We shall celebrate -- among
the dust and cobwebs.

Ben Hur takes his arm warmly, then leaves the room.
Simonides and Esther exchange a worried glance.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

295

Esther and Ben Hur at the parapet. He has changed into
a tunic and robe.

BEN HUR
We stood here before.

ESTHER
A long while ago.

6-27-58

P.133

IRAS (in a fury of hurt pride)
So this is what you are! Slave to a
slave who doesn't even know how to love
your anger! She makes you a coward and
a fool!

317X2
CONT'D
(3)

(She crosses to the tent flap and
turns)

You, match with Messala! Race with him
in the great circus! You will lose, Judah,
just as you've chosen to lose me. I shall
be there to watch you, as I watch you now.
And I know, I know Messala will defeat you!

She goes. Ben Hur returns to the divan and throws
himself on to it.

DISSOLVE TO:

PORTICO OF A ROMAN BATH - DAY

318

Beyond the columns of the portico in the background is
a lush orchard. The bathing pool is of marble. Gaming
tables and massage cubicles are scattered about. There
are some fifty or sixty Roman officers and officials
present, some in the pool, some at gaming tables.

Messala is stretched out on a rubbing table, being worked
over by a stocky man with a shaved head. Drusus is
nearby on another table.

CLOSE SHOT TOWARD ENTRY

319

The Sheik, followed by several attendants with large
coffers, enters. There is a sudden silence as the Romans
stare at the newcomer in surprise and some hostility.

THE SHEIK

Gentlemen, officers, defenders of
great Rome's Imperium, may I enter?

There is another silence. Then Messala sits up.

MESSALA

Certainly, Sheik.
(dryly)

You do us an unexpected honor.

THE SHEIK (blandly)

The noble Tribune is gracious.

Pilate comes down from his dais, goes to meet him.

466
CONT'D
(2)

PILATE

I hope I bring you a good conclusion to your day. I have a message for you from the Consul, your father.

BEN HUR (with a reserved sincerity)
I honour him.

PILATE

As you may honour yourself. You have been made a citizen of Rome.

BEN HUR (his controlled resentment begins to rise)
I have just come from a valley of stone, my lord Pilate, where my mother and sister live what's left of their lives: by Rome's will -- lepers, outcasts without hope.

PILATE (with real feeling)
I have heard this. There was great blame there: very deeply regretted.

BEN HUR
Their flesh is mine, my lord Pilate: it already carries Rome's mark. The mark is suffering and corruption.

PILATE
Messala is dead. What he did has had its way with him.

BEN HUR (with a cold, deadly anger)
The deed was not Messala's. Rome destroyed Messala, as surely as Rome has destroyed my family.

PILATE (a quiet reasonableness)
Where there is greatness -- great government, or power -- even great feeling or compassion -- error, also is great. We progress and mature by fault. Perfect freedom, as we know, has no existence. But Rome has said she is ready to join your life to hers in a great future. I am sure Young Arrius will choose it.

BEN HUR
I am Judah Ben Hur.

Pilate pauses, takes in the significance of Ben Hur's rejection of Rome.

466
CONT'D
(3)

PILATE (indicating the Tribunal)
When I go up those stairs, I become Caesar's representative: I have already seen and heard, here in Jerusalem, more than I care for. Even the godmongers are becoming subversive, like this poor fellow from Nazareth, setting himself up as a King of the Jews.

(He comes close to Ben Hur)
This disaffection has come very close to you. You are a Jew and a Prince. Today you have become victor and hero to them. They will look to you, their one true god, as I called you. If you stay here, you will find yourself part of this tragedy.

BEN HUR
I am already part of this tragedy.
(He takes the ring off his finger:)
Return this to Arrius. I honour him too well to wear it any longer.

Pilate takes the ring, looks at it and back at Ben Hur, then goes up the steps to the dais. When he speaks, his voice is impersonal.

PILATE
Even for the sake of Arrius, I can't protect you from personal disaster if you stay here. You're too great a danger to Rome. Leave Judea. You have my warning.

A slight pause, while they face each other. Then Ben Hur bows abruptly and goes.

DISSOLVE

CLOSE SHOT - ESTHER - NIGHT

467

The roof of the House of Hur. Esther is watching restlessly, despondently. Suddenly the shadow goes from her face.

MEDIUM SHOT - EXT. COURTYARD

468

Ben Hur opens the gate and walks toward the house.

Ben Hur breaks through the crowd.

491
CONT'D
(2)

TIRZAH (in awe and pity)
We were close beside him. I thought
I could hear his heart.

CLOSE SHOT OF THE WOMEN

492

Standing as we left them, watching the disappearing
mob.

TIRZAH (in sudden amazement)
I can stand, Esther, easily stand.

Esther and Miriam look with wonder at Tirzah's
renewed strength.

MIRIAM (turning to Esther)
We must go back.

ESTHER (deeply distressed)
I brought you here, to this, when
I hoped...

MIRIAM (with a sudden deep
conviction)
You haven't failed.

As they turn away --

DISSOLVE TO:

SHOT OF BEN HUR

492X1

Taking a gourd of water to Christ. It is knocked
out of his hand by a soldier.

DISSOLVE TO:

HILL AT CALVARY OUTSIDE JERUSALEM
EXTERIOR LONG SHOT SHOOTING FROM BEHIND THE CROSS

493

It is a stark, silent vista, revealed between the
crosses in the f.g. Immediately below the condemned
are the Roman executioners, impassively waiting for
those on the crosses to die. A short distance away,
silent, mourning women kneel - and beyond, as far as
the eye can see, covering the slopes of Golgotha,
is the multitude, no longer blood-thirsty, but
quiet now.

CLOSE SHOT OF BEN HUR

494

Standing at the bottom of the hill, looking up toward the crosses. Stunned by the spectacle, filled with sorrow, he ignores the wind which tears at him.

He becomes aware of Balthasar beside him, a broken old man.

BALTHASAR

I have lived too long.

Ben Hur looks at him for a moment and turns back to look at the crucifixion.

As he stands there, the sky is darkened: a great shudder takes the earth. Ben Hur is thrown to his knees: lightning splits the sky, and thunder answers it.

DISSOLVE TO:

ESTHER, MIRIAM AND TIRZAH

495

On the road out of the city, towards the valley of the lepers, as the sky darkens. The women speak still of what they have seen.

ESTHER

He will die and you haven't heard
Him. You will never know the life
I have seen in His face.

TIRZAH

We have seen Him. And I'm not
afraid any more.

MIRIAM

As though He were carrying in that
cross the pain of the world...

A flash of lightning illumines their faces. Esther gives a gasp as she sees Miriam and Tirzah. Their faces are clear of disease.

ESTHER

Miriam...!

Miriam looks at her. But it is dark again.

ESTHER

I thought...

Thunder drowns her voice. A fierce rain is falling, as though to wash away the deed of the crucifixion. Another flash, for a moment holding them in broad daylight. Esther can see that Miriam and Tirzah are cured.

ESTHER

Do you see your hand?

In the last flickering of the lightning they look at their hands.

CLOSE SHOT

496

of their hands, feeling the smooth clear skin.

MEDIUM SHOT OF THE THREE WOMEN

497

The light gradually returns. The rain lessens. Miriam and Tirzah look at one another, unable at first to speak.

TIRZAH

We are clean! Mother - Esther - we are well!

She flings her arms around Esther, and then around Miriam.

MIRIAM (holding Tirzah's face in her hands)

It is true! It is true!

TIRZAH (crying with joy)

It is true.

Suddenly they look at each other with a growing understanding. They turn their faces in the direction from which they have come.

MIRIAM

He is dead; I feel it. And we are living again.

ESTHER

It's as if - as if He had given us His life.

MIRIAM

The hand of quiet has reached us, Esther. He is near.

The rain has stopped. Points of light flash from the wet leaves as they stand looking at the sky.

DISSOLVE

STREET OF JERUSALEM - BEN HUR'S HOUSE

498

Great activity: people going about their business. Ben Hur walks slowly toward his house. Goes toward the gate.

After a moment of silence he looks around.

501
CONT'D
(2)

ESTHER

They are waiting for you.

Together they mount the stairs.

ROOF

502

As they step onto the roof, Ben Hur stands for a moment, amazed and with a growing joy.

From: Wm. Wyler
J.J. Cohn

Ben-Hur
Retakes

6-19-59 P.100

HUR LIVING ROOM - DINING SEQUENCE
CLOSE-UP OF TIRZAH
CLOSE-UP OF BEN HUR

XXX 70

INT. HUR HOUSE - CLOSE-UP BEN HUR

XXX 80

seated, speaking with Simonides.

BEN HUR (after a pause)
We'll speak further tonight. You're
weary from your journey.

EXT. HUR ROOFTOP - SKY BACKING

XXX 102

Ben Hur and Tirzah watching Messala and Gratis.

SKY BACKING AT OASIS - CLOSE-UP BALTHASAR

XXX 267

for introduction.

Ben Hur
Retakes

6-19-59

P.100-G

INT. KITCHEN - CLOSE-UP ESTHER

XXX 294

by post.

INT. HUR KITCHEN - CLOSE-UP BEN HUR

XXX 294A

BEN HUR

You should have been less loyal.

Ben Hur
Retakes

6-19-59

P.100-H

SHEIK'S TENT - STABLE PORTION - CLOSE-UP SHEIK
and BEN HUR

XXX 325

(Scene content later)

Ben Hur
Retakes

6-19-59 P.100-J

CLOSE-UP BEN HUR - CUBICLE

XXX 327

against wall.

CLOSE-UP, MESSALA'S CHARIOT WHEEL

XXX 350

INT. SMALL CHAMBER (DISPENSARY) - CLOSE-UP BEN HUR

XXX 442

BEN HUR

Hating you will not bring my mother
and sister back to life.

EXT. SKY BACKING

XXX 464

Sermon on the Mount episode. BEN HUR and BALTHASAR

SERMON ON THE MOUNT

464

BALTHASAR

Come! Come and listen!

BEN HUR

When the Romans were marching me to
the galleys thirst had nearly killed
me but a man gave me water to drink
and I went on living. I should have
done better if he'd poured it into
the sand.

BALTHASAR

Come with me! Come and listen --

BEN HUR

I have business with Rome.

EXT. STAIRS

XXX 491

People watching procession of Christ carrying cross.

CLOSE-UP ESTHER

XX 492

Looking after Christ carrying cross, etc.

EXT. CALVARY - BEN HUR, BALTHASAR

XXX 494

(Scene content later)

Ben Hur
Retakes

6-19-59 P.100-K

INT. ROAD CAVE

XXX 495

Esther, Miriam, Tirzah before healing.

(Scene content later)

INT. HUR HOUSE - TOP OF STAIRS (TAG)

XXX 502

Meeting: Ben Hur, Tirzah, Miriam (Esther)

From J. J. Cohn

XXX 277

(Cont'd)

SHEIK

You have a keen eye. Where did you acquire it?

BEN-HUR

In the Circus, in Rome.

SHEIK (impressed)

You have driven in the great Circus?

BEN-HUR

Yes.

SHEIK

Tell me, my friend, could you make my four run as one?

BEN-HUR

I am on my way to Jerusalem.

SHEIK

Stay for just a few days... Be my honored guest. And when you are ready to leave I will send you on your way with an escort of my warriors.

BEN-HUR

You are very gracious, but my caravan--

SHEIK

-- your caravan rests until daylight tomorrow. There is time to eat and drink and talk well into the night. Come to my tent and refresh yourself - and let me hear how you raced in Rome!

DISSOLVE

INT. TENT

XXX 277X1

SHEIK

If I had a voice to sing, I would sing you the psalm of horses, and you wouldn't mock, you who understand and love them as well. I tell you, there is no other animal who has descended so unscathed from the first innocent forming of the world! And tomorrow I shall put Antares on the inside.

BEN-HUR

When you do, shorten the yoke. It will help in the turns.

SHEIK

Your coming here was so fit - so right. We might have achieved wonders... But you have to go.

BEN-HUR

I make a journey which won't wait.

SHEIK

Ah, well...

BALTHASAR

Whatever you seek, my friend, go in God's way and you will find it.

SHEIK

Perhaps you will come back. And when you do, bring your friends - bring your wives.

BEN-HUR

I have no wives.

SHEIK (incredulously)

No wives at all! I have six -- no, seven.

BALTHASAR

And that is because he is traveling. At home he has more.

SHEIK

Believe me -- it is a great advantage to have many wives.

BEN-HUR

Some day I hope to have one.

SHEIK

One wife! One God, that I can understand, but one wife -- that is not civilized.

(then chidingly)

It is not generous.

He belches and glances at Ben-Hur.

SHEIK

Was the food not to your liking?

BEN-HUR

Yes, indeed.

The Sheik belches again, rather pointedly. Ben-Hur, realizing what is expected of him belches also.

SHEIK (pleased)

Thank you. And take my advice -- buy yourself some wives.

(wiping his hands on the trousers of a passing servant, then rising)

Now I must say goodnight to my beauties. When they are ready for sleep, they grow impatient -- (confidentially)

-- and jealous. They wait to see which one I will embrace first.

BEN-HUR

I'll leave you, then, and make my way back...

SHEIK

No -- no. Stay, my friend -- stay and see them.

(he claps his hands)

INT. SHEIK'S TENT (AFTER HORSES HAVE LEFT)

XXX277A

SHEIK

When they race at Jerusalem they will challenge the finest teams in the world, not to mention the champion of the East - the Tribune Messala, with his black devils. He stops at nothing to win.

BEN HUR

Messala - in the Circus?

SHEIK

Yes. You know him?

BEN HUR (evenly)

Yes, I know him.

The Sheik regards Ben Hur penetratingly.

SHEIK

Perhaps without much liking.

Ben Hur doesn't answer.

SHEIK (urgently)

Judah Ben Hur, my people are praying for a man who can drive their team to victory over Messala. You could be that man. You could be the one to stamp this Roman's arrogance into the sand of the arena. You have seen my horses. They need only a driver who is worthy of them - who will rule them with love and not the whip. For such a man they will outrace the wind!

BEN HUR

And yet I can't stay.

SHEIK

I am sorry. But think of it! To break his pride - to humble this Tribune before the very people he has degraded.

(as Ben Hur starts to speak)

I know - it isn't possible. But does it not delight your imagination - defeat and humiliation at the hands of a Jew! Tell me, does it not answer your purpose?

BEN HUR
I must deal with Messala in
my own way.

XXX277A
CONT'D
(2)

He begins to pick up some of his traveling gear,
preparatory to leaving.

BALTHASAR

And your way is to kill him...

Both Ben Hur and the Sheik turn and stare at him in
surprise. The Sheik looks sharply, questioningly, at
Ben Hur as Balthasar moves closer to Ben Hur.

BALTHASAR

I see this terrible thing in your
eyes, Judah Ben Hur. But no matter
what this man has done to you, you
have no right to take his life. He
will be punished inevitably.

BEN HUR

I don't believe in miracles.

BALTHASAR

All of life is a miracle. Why will
you not accept God's judgment?

SHEIK

He will deal with Messala in this
world - not the next.

(to Ben Hur)

Huh?

Ben Hur does not confirm or deny this.

BALTHASAR

You don't believe in miracles. Yet
God once spoke to me out of the
darkness; and a star led me to a
village called Bethlehem, where I
found a new-born Child in a manger.
And God lived in this Child.

(a pause)

By now He is a grown man, and must
be ready to begin His work. That
is why I have returned here, so that
I may be at hand when He comes among us.

(with a changed tone)

He is near. He saw the sun set this
evening, as we did. Perhaps He is
standing in a doorway, somewhere, or
on a hilltop. Perhaps He is a shepherd,
a merchant, a fisherman. But He lives!
And all our lives will carry His mark.

Ben Hur does not reply. Balthasar moves toward the door, then turns back.

XXX 277A
CONT'D
(3)

BALTHASAR

There are many paths to God,
my son. I hope yours will
not be too difficult.

He nods to the Sheik and goes out.

SHEIK

Balthasar is a good man.
But until all men are like
him we must keep our swords
bright.

BEN HUR (smiling)

And our intention true. So
I'll have to leave you.

Once again he picks up his gear; the Sheik eyes him thoughtfully.

SHEIK (meaningly)

Could not my stars be the in-
strument of your design --
there is no law in the arena...
many are killed.

Ben Hur regards the Sheik levelly, without words.

SHEIK

Remember that. Fill your sleep
with it... wake and ride with
it in your heart.
(after a slight pause)
I hope to see you again.

Ben Hur leaves, the Sheik looking after him.

DISSOLVE TO: