



## Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ

Lew Wallace (1827 - 1905)

Read by:	Mark F. Smith	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
Length:	23 hours and 16 minutes	Catalog:	DB-1213
Language:	English	UPC:	0701236969313
Style:	Solo	MSLP:	\$13.99
Genre:	Action & Adventure Fiction, Historical Fiction		

*Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ* was published in 1880 and became the best-selling American novel of all time until it was surpassed by *Gone with the Wind* in 1936. Set at the beginning of the first century, the story's eight books tell the life story of Judah Ben-Hur, a Jewish prince from Jerusalem. His story alternates and intersects with that of Jesus, who is about the same age and from the same area. As we begin he is accused of assassination and enslaved by the Romans, who also imprison his mother and sister and confiscate the family property. While serving on a Roman galley during a battle Judah saves the life of the commander, who adopts and frees him. Judah, now a Roman citizen, vows revenge and trains as a soldier and eventually becomes a

charioteer. The centerpiece of the book is a high stakes chariot race between Judah and Massala, a childhood friend turned Roman soldier and adversary. After his victory, Judah returns to Jerusalem, finds and frees his mother and sister and becomes a devoted follower of Christ. His sister and mother are cured of leprosy by Christ, and Judah witnesses his crucifixion. *Ben-Hur* has been called "the most influential Christian book of the 19th century". The 1959 film starring Charlton Heston was the most expensive film ever made at the time and one of the most successful, winning 11 Academy Awards and selling many millions of tickets.

Lewis "Lew" Wallace (April 10, 1827 – February 15, 1905) was American lawyer, soldier, diplomat, politician and author well known for the popular novel *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ*. Born in Indiana, his father was a lawyer and West Point graduate who served in the Indiana legislature and then as lieutenant governor, governor, and member of Congress. Lew left school at age 16 to work at the county and study law at his father's office. He joined the army of Zachary Taylor during the Mexican-American war but did not see combat. He was admitted to the bar in 1849, served briefly as a prosecuting attorney and was elected to the state senate in 1856. With the onset of the Civil War he joined the Union Army under U.S. Grant and became the youngest major general at age 34. He was blamed for actions that caused major casualties at the battle of Shiloh, accusations which he felt were wrongful and for which he sought vindication. Following the war he returned to law and eventually served as Governor of the New Mexico Territory from 1878 – 1881, where he had dealings with outlaw Billy the Kid. He later served as U.S. Minister to the Ottoman Empire in 1881 – 1885, after which he returned to Indiana and continued to write. He completed *Ben-Hur* during his tenure in New Mexico and it became a best seller, making Wallace a wealthy man. A statue of Wallace in military dress stands in the National Statuary Collection in the U.S. Capitol, the only novelist so honored.