

SAMSON: THE WAR OF LABINOR

Written by

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Based on the Biblical Tale of Samson

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FADE IN:

INT. INNER TEMPLE - CITY OF DAN - NIGHT

Darkly lit room with a FIRE ALTAR. CLOSE ON a priest, XANIT (40, slender with a chiseled face and short beard) dressed in SACKCLOTH and ASHES. He kneels on the floor fervently praying, chanting incantations in Hebrew while rubbing ashes on his skin:

XANIT

God of heaven, have mercy on us.
God of heaven, have mercy on us.
God of heaven, have mercy on us --

SOUND OF RISING CRIES. Xanit stops to listen, slowly standing as he looks into the FIRE where he sees human figures: SFX: The face of a WOMAN crying out in TERROR (flames); shifting to PEOPLE running through the town; (flames) shifting to the face of DEATH, an engulfing CREATURE, roaring as a Male Figure with long hair raises a sword; the Male Figure slashes at the Monstrous face and the altar's fire BURSTS into GREATER FLAMES.

Xanit cowers, shielding his face. As the fire on the altar settles, he beholds the faint fire aglow.

XANIT (CONT'D)

God, have mercy on us all.

EXT. CITY OF TIMNATH - SAME

LOUD CLANKING OF ARMOR. A RANK OF SOLDIERS rush through the streets, carrying torches that light up the dark night --

From what we can see, it's a cramped area made up of THICK BRICK HOUSES and narrow, maze-like streets.

SOLDIERS move hastily along the dirt passage -- CLOSE ON the face of an angry GENERAL (55, unshaven, seasoned by war) -- leading the hungry pack of warriors forward.

INT. BETHANY HOUSE IN TIMNATH - SAME

SOUNDS OF FEMININE MOANING in a DARK ROOM -- a FLICKERING CANDLE, perched on a nearby table, casts the SHADOWS OF TWO FIGURES making love --

A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (22) whose face is illuminated by the soft light, releases MOANS OF PLEASURE as her body tenses against the ridged stone wall. Soon a MUSCULAR MAN, only seen from the back, rises into the frame, passionately KISSING her mouth. Two lovers enjoy the intensity of sexual pleasure -- their bodies convulsing as they make love upright.

EXT./INT. BETHANY HOUSE IN TIMNATH - SAME - ROOM

The General stealthily DRAWS his GLEAMING SWORD as a Soldier holds a TORCH near a wooden door -- ANOTHER Soldier KICKS the door open --

The Beautiful Woman stands guiltily among the illuminations of lit torches and drawn swords, her NAKED BODY exposed.

GENERAL

Cover her!

SAMSON (O.C.)

Allow me the act of modesty.

A few SOLDIERS point their swords towards SAMSON, (38, rugged, handsome but completely BALD and hairless) who reaches for a WHITE SHAWL on the floor, soon approaching the woman. SWORDS follow his movement as he looks her in the eyes and gently placing the shawl around her body.

SAMSON (CONT'D)

Remove your swords... you've frightened her enough.

The General waves the men off as they let their swords down.

GENERAL

Get her out of here.

A YOUNG SOLDIER (21) escorts the woman towards the door as Samson keeps his back towards the General.

GENERAL (CONT'D)

Were the brothels you frequented in Timnath not enough that you *had* to lay with one of the king's wives?

Samson turns around, coolly estimating the poised battalion of men, their SWORDS still GLARING in the light.

SAMSON

(sarcastically)

Forgive me, I did not know of her betrothal.

(MORE)

SAMSON (CONT'D)
 Perhaps this will create much
 displeasure between me and thy
 Lord.

A Soldier tightens his hand around his sword's pommel.

GENERAL
 "Displeasure" is too kind a word
 for what you are to expect,
 Israelite... Bind him.

The Soldiers hesitate.

GENERAL (CONT'D)
 I said, bind him!

Samson smirks at a nearby Soldier, but soon Samson raises his fists -- Samson eyes the General as a Soldier quickly wraps a thick rope around Samson's wrists. ANOTHER puts a BLACK MASK over Samson's head --

EXT. CITY OF TIMNATH - SAME - BACK GATE

Two SOLDIERS, one at each post with an in-ground rotating wheel, begin turning the WHEEL, which OPENS UP a MASSIVE, THICK STONE WALLS to city -- the wall, forty feet high and ten feet wide, mechanically rises open --

The two Soldiers, tugging on Samson's chains, move him towards the rising stone wall as the General and a band of SOLDIERS stand watching. Samson is still masked, his METAL CHAINS dragging on the ground.

To the soldiers at the wheel:

GENERAL
 Yield!

The soldiers stop turning the wheel. A Soldier unmask him. Samson and the General stand eye to eye:

GENERAL (CONT'D)
 You've betrayed the good graces of
 this land and had it not been for
 the Week of Peace, you would have
 already met your demise.

SAMSON
 (smiling)
 General Tetron, had it not been for
 the Week of Peace, you would have
 already met yours.

The General, aggravated, yells to a nearby soldier:

GENERAL
Take him away!

The Soldier pulls the LONG CHAIN attached to Samson's chains --
Samson moves towards the OPENED GATE - a DARK ABYSS ahead --

EXT. NAPHTHALI VILLAGE - EARLY MORNING - GRAZING PLAINS

SOUNDS OF BLEATING as COUNTLESS SHEEP graze along the desert
plains, green mixed with patches of large, gray rock.

A SHEPHERD BOY (10) sits against a small boulder, peacefully
watching the sheep while a SHEPHERD (male, 45) approaches.
They speak in Hebrew:

SHEPHERD MAN
Steer them away from the rocks.

The Son steers sheep away with his rod, but RISING BLEATS
catch his attention -- Son and Father move toward BLEATING .

SHEPHERD MAN (CONT'D)
Stay back.

Below, sheep begin to scatter. The father ventures ahead.

SHEPHERD BOY
Father?

The father jumps down to a lower area, soon meeting a BLOODY
PATCH of GRASS. The father looks up, beholding a slain SHEEP
lying on the ground. He stoops down to examine the blood
matted on the white wool -- SUDDENLY a SILVER SPEAR STRIKES
THROUGH his CHEST, the blood beginning to ooze from his mouth--

The son begins to back step.

SHEPHERD BOY (CONT'D)
Father?

The son cries as a SILVER SPEAR thrusts into his chest.

FRAME WIDENS TO REVEAL: On the same spear, the DEAD BODIES of
both father and son -- face to face -- hanging on the raised
spear. The bloody-mouth father strains his eyes to gaze upon
his DEAD SON --

SOMETHING moves the SPEAR, pushing the two hoisted bodies
forward --

EXT. CITY OF TIMNATH - SAME

SOUND OF CHEERING. CLOSE ON a BASKET OF WHITE PETALS -- A YOUNG GIRL holds the basket, pulling a few petals from it, dropping them on the ground -- YOUNG CHILDREN, boys and girls, run while LITTERING WHITE PETALS all along the COBBLESTONED ALLEYS -- A BOY DROPS HIS BASKET while running towards the SEMI-COLOSSEUM filled with cheering TIMNATHS --

EXT. COLOSSEUM - SAME - CITY OF TIMNATH

WHITE PETALS CARPET the ground, leading towards an ENORMOUS SILVER STATUE of a TIMNATH IRON GOD -- WOMEN, dressed in WHITE, circle the STATUE, dropping white petals -- ROYALS and OFFICIALS, including the KING and his WIVES (Samson's Lover among them), behold the ceremony -- The King, his fingers lightly TAPPING against his sword's pommel, gestures for his General (from earlier) to approach --

TIMNATH KING

What of the Israelite?

GENERAL

He awaits his judgment, my King.

TIMNATH KING

Find every weapon of torture, and make sure he pays.

SOUNDS of CLANKING.

EXT. CITY OF TIMNATH - MORNING - OUTER GATES

The SUN beats down on -- an AFRICAN MAN (40), who kneels on the ground, enervated and half-conscious. Again the sound of CLANKING. FRAME WIDENS to reveal about TWENTY ASSAULTED MEN of all shapes and sizes chained to GIANT METAL CYLINDER POSTS, feet wide in diameter and weighing hundreds of pounds.

Samson, also BRUISED and CHAINED, stands scaling the HEIGHT of the pole, soon hitting his SLACK CHAINS AGAINST THE METAL.

MALE'S VOICE (O.S.)

I told you to stop that.

A BELLIGERENT SOLDIER walks over to Samson.

SAMSON

Or else what?

The Soldier pulls out his WHIP and CRACKS it across Samson's back, knocking Samson to his knees.

SOLDIER

(laughing)

What's wrong? Oh, now you want to listen?

Samson gets back up, working through his enervation.

SAMSON

Is that all you've got?

The Soldier, hollering, strikes at Samson again! This time Samson doesn't budge --

The onlookers watch as the Soldier strikes again, giving it to Samson, blow after blow, until Samson kneels to the ground.

The Soldier breathes heavily as Samson rises.

SAMSON (CONT'D)

Is that all you've got?

The Soldier lashes again but Samson dodges, catches the whip and pulls the soldier down.

Samson then hollers as he yanks down the giant pole, maneuvering it over to the SCREAMING soldier who meets his CRUSHING DEATH --

The other prisoners watch as Samson pulls his CHAINS, edging it towards the end of the pole, soon setting himself free. One of the prisoners cry out.

MAN

Son of the gods -- have mercy on me!

Samson, dragging his chains, wearily moves towards the desert.

MAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Son of the gods, have mercy on me!

EXT. MEDITERRANEAN SEA - MORNING - CITY OF PHILISTIA

CAMERA ZOOMS ACROSS a small sea port towards a stone city less elaborate than Timnath, though it has a protective stone sheath around the whole city.

EXT. CITY OF PHILISTIA - SAME

CLOSE ON SOLDIER FIGURES etched in STONE WALLS. CAMERA ZOOMS across a MURAL OF STONE CARVINGS telling a story of war: Philistine soldiers defeating a nation of Shepherd men holding staffs in defense against their swords --

BUSTLE of the CITY: a BLACKSMITH places a hot sword in a wooden bucket of water, soon throwing it on a table filled with swords -- PHILISTINE MEN and WOMEN weave through the market area, GOATS BLEATING as BOYS drag them to market --

EXT. CITY OF PHILISTIA - SAME - ALLEY

Samson sits on the ground, a lone, vagabond figure with his pressed against his foreheads.

Sound of metal SCRAPING the ground --

Samson looks to his right and notices a SMALL HAND pushing a bowl of water. Samson exchanges a look with a PHILISTINE CHILD who kindly inches the water to him.

Samson takes the bowl, raising it to his face. He drinks.

SAMSON

Where is your family?

The boy points to an opened door - a 'hole in the wall' residence.

SAMSON (CONT'D)

They know you're feeding a stranger?

The child shakes his head. Samson slides the empty bowl back to the boy.

SAMSON (CONT'D)

It'll be our little secret then.

(a beat)

But if you're going to be a helper, find me something stronger than water for goodness sake.

The boy grabs the bowl and scurries towards home.

EXT. SETTLEMENT OF ZORAH - DAY - ENTRY GATE

Rural area not near as fortified as Timnath - low walls and a small, broken gate leading to the humble place --

EXT. SETTLEMENT OF ZORAH - MORNING - TEMPLE

Small, modest stone temple with columns. PRIESTS dressed in BLACK PRIESTLY GARB move towards the entrance --

INT. TEMPLE - SAME - CITY OF ZORAH

Inside is a contrast - no chairs, but ornate etching on the silver-plated walls. To the front of the temple, the oak wood altar is furnished with silver menorahs and silver statues of miniature angels - Xanit stands among the priests, addressing the chief priest, MANOAH (70, high priest with a long white beard, holding a staff):

XANIT

God has given me a vision of a new enemy. Men having stature we've never seen, possessing power and strength never attested to. Like the giants of old, except more horrifying.

RAMOR (25 tall, skinny with a long, neat beard) speaks up:

RAMOR

I must remind you, Lord Xanit, that not every vision can be from the Holy One.

MANOAH

Has Lord Xanit ever erred in any premonition? Or faulted in any vision?

RAMOR

(reluctantly)
He has not.

MANOAH

Then we must pay heed.

A fellow ELDERLY PRIEST (65) speaks up:

ELDERLY PRIEST

What has God spoken, Holy Xanit?

XANIT

God sends word that destruction will come, yet there is one in strength and unlikely in form who shall come to deliver us all.

EXT. CITY OF PHILISTIA - DAY

The sun beats down on the colorful, merchant city.

INT. ROOM - SAME

Samson stands by the door, drinking from a cup while watching PHILISTINES BUSTLE throughout the street. His wounds (from earlier) are healed somewhat. MANLEY, the procurer, sits at a table, counting BRONZE COINS. He looks at the WELTS on Samson's wrist.

MANLEY

You've never told me where you got those scars from.

Samson looks at him.

SAMSON

And I don't think I ever plan to either.

Manly sizes him up.

MANLEY

You know you have a lot of mouth for being a stranger in another man's land.

(a beat)

Listen, you've made me quite a bounty here. Perhaps we can make travel of your gifts... from Philistia to beyond.

A BAKER, (55, ruddy) wearing an apron sullied with flour, approaches and enters the room.

BAKER

(ref: Samson)

Is this the scoundrel you say is the strongest in all of Philistia?

Samson doesn't pay the Baker any mind.

PROCURER

He is what you say... and more.

The Baker yanks off his apron.

BAKER

Then you have a new challenge.

MANLEY

(rising from the table)
 You hear that, Samson. Another man
 here to take your title. What do
 you say to do?

Samson finally pays Manley some attention.

SAMSON

Let him set his price. I just ope
 his money is more value than his
 mouth.

The Baker flings the table to the ground.

BAKER

Shut up and face me.

Samson coolly stands in the Baker's face.

MANLEY

Samson? He's here to pay. Give him
 a chance.

Samson grits his teeth and takes a seat. He then picks up the
 table and positions it in front of him, soon raising his hand
 inviting the Baker to sit at the other table.

MANLEY (CONT'D)

Your earnings first.

The Baker smiles as he places two bronze coins on the table.
 He then sits down and places his elbow on the table - an arm
 wrestling match. Samson joins his hand --

INT. TAVERN - SAME - CITY OF PHILISTIA

SOUND OF CHEERING. A HAND puts down another HAND in
 submission. A CROWD of GRIM MEN and WOMEN, who CHEER,
 surrounds Samson as he SLAMS down another hand.

Samson has just won another arm wrestling match. The LOSING
 OPPONENT, a thick MAN, moves out of the competing seat.

SAMSON

Is this the best the Philistines
 have to offer? Come on. Someone...

Samson drinks from a nearby mug - wine. He looks a bit off
 kilter.

SAMSON (CONT'D)

... defeat me!