

FADE IN:

INT. INNER TEMPLE - CITY OF DAN - NIGHT

Darkly lit room at the center, a FIRE ALTAR. CLOSE ON a priest, **XANIT (40, slender, chiseled face, short beard)** dressed in SACKCLOTH, ASHES covering his skin. He kneels on the ground 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: 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; the altar's fire BURST into GREATER FLAMES; Xanit hollers and cowers, shielding his face.

His shivering body begins to weep. On the altar, a tamed and faint fire aglow.

EXT. CITY OF TIMNATH - SAME

LOUD CLANKING OF METAL. 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 WALL 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 forward.

INT. BETHANY HOUSE IN TIMNATH - SAME

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

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.

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 --

Her NAKED BODY expose, woman stands guiltily among the illumination of lit torches and drawn swords,.

GENERAL

Cover her!

SAMSON (O.C.)

Allow me.

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

SAMSON (CONT'D)

Remove your swords... you've frightened her enough. Don't not bring harm upon her head as contention is with me.

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

GENERAL

Get her out of here.

A YOUNG SOLDIER (23) escorts the woman toward the door as Samson keeps his back toward the General.

GENERAL (O.C.) (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 among 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, General.

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 smiles at a nearby Soldier, soon raising his fists --
The Soldier quickly wraps the thick rope around Samson's
wrist. 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 the MASSIVE,
THICK STONE WALLS of the city -- the wall, forty feet high
and ten feet wide, mechanically opens --

The two Soldiers, tugging on Samson's chains, move him toward
the rising 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 have betrayed the good graces
of this land and had not been for
the Week of Peace, you would have
already met your demise.

SAMSON

Had it not been for the week of
peace, perhaps you would have
already met yours, General.

The General, aggravated, nods to a nearby soldier, who soon pulls the LONG CHAIN attached to Samson's chains -- Samson moves toward 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 and mixed with patches of large, gray rock.

A SHEPHERD BOY (10) sits against a small boulder, watching the sheep while a SHEPHERD MAN (45) walks over. They speak in Hebrew:

SHEPHERD MAN

Steer them away from the rocks.

The son nods as his father approaches, soon tenderly patting his son's head -- the Son steers sheep away with his rod, but RISING BLEATS catch his attention --

Son and Father move toward BLEATING -- Below, sheep begin to scatter. The father gestures for the son to stay put while he ventures ahead.

SHEPHERD BOY

Father?

The father jumps down to a lower area, meeting a BLOODY PATCH of GRASS. A dead SHEEP strewn 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.

FRAME WIDENS TO REVEAL: On the same spear, the DEAD BODY of his son, hanging -- Face to face, the 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 run while LITTERING PETALS all along the COBBLESTONED ALLEYS -- A BOY DROPS HIS BASKET while running toward the SEMI-COLOSSEUM filled with cheering TIMNATHS --

EXT. COLOSSEUM - SAME - CITY OF TIMNATH

WHITE PETALS CARPET the ground, leading toward an ENORMOUS SILVER STATUE of a TIMNATH IRON GOD -- WOMEN, dressed in WHITE, circle the STATUE, dropping 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 -- the two exchange a word as the General points toward the city's gates --

In the distance, the LARGE OUTER GATES -- SOUND OF METAL CLINKING.

EXT. CITY OF TIMNATH - MORNING - OUTER GATES

The ARID SUN beats down on an AFRICAN MAN (40), who kneels on the ground, enervated and half-conscious. Again, the sound CLANKING.

FRAME WIDENS to reveal about TWENTY ASSAULTED MEN, of all shapes and sizes chained to GIANT-LIKE METAL CYLINDER POSTS, feet wide in diameter and weighing hundreds of pounds.

Samson, also BRUISED and CHAINED, stands calculating the HEIGHT of the pole. He slams 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

(smirking)

Or else what?

The Soldier pulls out his WHIP and LANDS it on Samson's back, knocking Samson to the ground.

SOLDIER

(laughing)

What's wrong? Now you want to listen after I told you to stop?

Other Prisoners watch as Samson stands up.

SAMSON

Is that all you've got?

The Soldier, hollering, strikes at Samson again! This time Samson takes the lash, not budging --

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

The Soldier breathing heavily as Samson rises.

SAMSON (CONT'D)

Is that all you've got...

The Soldier lashes again but Samson dodges, catching the whip and pulling the soldier down. Samson yanks down the giant pole and maneuvers out the way, shifting it down on the SCREAMING soldier who meets his crushing death --

Prisoners watch as Samson pulls his CHAINS from under the pole, edging it toward the end of the pole, setting himself free --

PRISONER 1

Son of the gods -- save me!

Samson, dragging chains, wearily moves towards the desert.

PRISONER 1 (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Son of the gods, have mercy on me!

EXT. SETTLEMENT OF ZORAH - MORNING - ENTRY GATE

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

EXT. SETTLEMENT OF ZORAH - SAME - TEMPLE

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. The altar, in the front, has fine furnishings, oak wood, silver menorahs, and silver statues of dwarfed angels - Xanit stands among the priests, addressing the chief priest, **MANOAH (70, high priest, a long white beard, holding a staff):**

XANIT

God has given me a vision of a new enemy.

(MORE)

XANIT (CONT'D)

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 premonition? Or faulted in 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.

ELDERLY PRIEST

Why has God sent such a message?

XANIT

Our lands are under judgment for the sins of the wicked.

ELDERLY PRIEST

(to the others)
Then we must repent!

XANIT

We cannot! Our holy offerings cannot atone for what is to come. Rather, we must wage war.

ELDERLY PRIEST

Impossible! That is blasphemy! God is a God of sacrifice and justice, surely He shall hear our cries and save us from this travesty!

The men gathered MURMUR amongst themselves. Ramor gives Xanit a wry smile.

MANOAH

Quiet!

XANIT

Please, listen! Destruction is coming whether you believe it or not! We must fight though it may not be our nature. It is true that we are simply a nation of shepherds and priests who rather the feel of wool and sack cloth over that of the sword. But *hear me*, what is to come will change us all.

MANOAH

Men of Israel, have faith in God and not in peril. He has delivered before and He is God enough to deliver us again. Hear His word... and know His mercies.

EXT. MEDITERRANEAN SEA - SAME - CITY OF PHILISTIA

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

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 the weapon on a table filled with swords -- PHILISTINE MEN and WOMEN weave through the market area -- GOATS BLEATING as BOYS drag them to market --

ALLEY

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

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 (7)** 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 open 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.

He exchanges a smile with the boy, who soon scurries away, entering an open door nearby where his MOTHER (25) guides him in. She looks cautiously at Samson.

INT. TRIANGLE-SHAPED ROOM - CONTINUOUS - PHILISTIA

Samson stands by the door rubbing his WELTED WRISTS watching PHILISTINES BUSTLE throughout the street. His wounds as partially healed. A PROCURER sits at a table counting COINS.

PROCURER

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

Samson looks at the Procurer.

SAMSON

I don't like to speak of hell.

The Procurer sizes him up.

PROCURER

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 filled with flour,
enters while looking at Samson and then at the Procurer.

BAKER

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

PROCURER

He is what you say... and more.

The Baker yanks off his apron.

BAKER

Then I challenge him.

The Baker sits, putting his arm on the table.

PROCURER

Your earnings first.

The Baker smiles as he places two bronze coins on the table.
The Procurer collects them and gesture for Samson to sit.
Samson sits down, locking tight his hands with the opponent --
The Baker struggles against Samson until Samson coolly puts
him down. The Procurer LAUGHS as the Baker gets up.

PROCURER (CONT'D)

What's wrong, old Baker?

SAMSON

Leave him. He shouldn't squander
any more of his own honor --

The Baker throws the table down though Samson stays in his
chair, unmoved.

BAKER

Who are you to come into the land
of beasts and make a mockery of me?

PROCURER

He's the strongest man in all of
Philistia. Now, go tell every man
you know.

The Baker starts to laugh. Ceasing, in a serious tone:

BAKER

Do you know what you are saying?