Stephen Lang On His Faith In 'House Of David' And Playing Prophet Samuel

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As his turns in the James Cameron's blockbuster Avatar films have proven, acclaimed actor Stephen Lang knows what it's like to put his faith into a massive production — and his latest is the epic biblical series House of David.

House of David premieres on Prime Video Thursday with the first three episodes in the eight-episode series. House of David chronicles the story of the biblical figure David (Michael Iskander), who eventually becomes the revered king of Israel when King Saul (Ali Suliman) falls victim to his own pride. Lang plays the prophet Samuel, who from the direction of God anoints David as the new king.

When it came to playing Samuel in House of David, Lang said he approached the opportunity from a spiritual standpoint where faith comes into play in more ways than one.

In a recent Zoom conversation, Lang said that his "faith in in humanity and ambition of this project to be a positive influence" was key in getting involved in House of David.

"I'm not particularly religious, but I am schooled in religion and I have great respect for it. I believe in the ethic of so much of it," Lang explained. "I come from a very mixed religious background, but this particular subject is one that's very, very dear to my heart because it does give me a chance to explore the Jewish part of myself, which is what I am.

"My mother was Irish Catholic, so depending on who you talk to, they're going to say, 'Well, you're not a Jew at all!' and I go, 'Well, I did have a bar mitzvah, but sorry, whatever!'" Lang added with a grin. "The great Moshe Dayan said, "Hey, if you feel like a Jew, you're a Jew. Okay?' So, there's that aspect to it as well."

Perhaps one of the aspects that Stephen Lang is most interested in helping create House of David is because, as he noted, "a story for all … it's a universal story."

And as it regards his character, Samuel, Lang said he's thrilled that he gets to play a pivotal part in new telling of the story.
"Of course, Samuel is really the ignition, I think, for this story in many ways," Lang said. "He's revered by three of the world's great religions, Christianity, Judaism and Islam and he really is central, regarded very, very highly as a prophet and a seer by all those faiths. He has that distinction with very few; certainly with Moses."

Ultimately, Lang said, "I love playing a character who is revered by very, very diverse and sometimes disagreeing parties. It seems to me that it does present, theoretically, an opportunity to bring things together or maybe it's kind of one of those agree-to-disagree type of deals. So, it may be a roundabout way of talking about it but faith? I have faith in people, you know. I have hope and optimism in people, not so much in institutions, whether they be secular or whether they be religious."

Based on an idea by Jon Erwin and directed by Erwin, Jon Gunn, Alexanda La Roche, and Michael Nankin, House of David also stars Ayelet Zurer (Angels and Demons, Man of Steel) as Saul's trusted wife, Queen Ahinoam, Indy Lewis (Industry, King and Conqueror) as Mychal, the King and Queen's daughter and Martyn Ford (Mortal Kombat 2, The Sandman) as Goliath.

House of David premieres on Prime Video on Thursday with three episodes, which will be followed by the remainder of the series' eight episodes weekly.