

JUDITH



Bible, Revised Standard Version

The *Revised Standard Version* of the Bible is copyright © National Council of Churches of Christ in America and distributed to registered users (see USER DECLARATION) with their kind permission. The HTI is grateful to NCC and the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Computer Analysis of Texts (CCAT) for their permission to provide this WWW-accessible version.

Judith

Jdt.1

[1] In the twelfth year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, who ruled over the Assyrians in the great city of Nineveh, in the days of Arphaxad, who ruled over the Medes in Ecbatana --

[2] he is the king who built walls about Ecbatana with hewn stones three cubits thick and six cubits long; he made the walls seventy cubits high and fifty cubits wide;

[3] at the gates he built towers a hundred cubits high and sixty cubits wide at the foundations;

[4] and he made its gates, which were seventy cubits high and forty cubits wide, so that his armies could march out in force and his infantry form their ranks --

[5] it was in those days that King Nebuchadnezzar made war

against King Arphaxad in the great plain which is on the borders of Ragae.

[6] He was joined by all the people of the hill country and all those who lived along the Euphrates and the Tigris and the Hydaspes and in the plain where Arioch ruled the Elymaeans. Many nations joined the forces of the Chaldeans.

[7] Then Nebuchadnezzar king of the Assyrians sent to all who lived in Persia and to all who lived in the west, those who lived in Cilicia and Damascus and Lebanon and Antilebanon and all who lived along the seacoast,

[8] and those among the nations of Carmel and Gilead, and Upper Galilee and the great Plain of Esdraelon,

[9] and all who were in Samaria and its surrounding towns, and beyond the Jordan as far as Jerusalem and Bethany and Chelous and Kadesh and the river of Egypt, and Tahpanhes and Raamses and the whole land of Goshen,

[10] even beyond Tanis and Memphis, and all who lived in Egypt as far as the borders of Ethiopia.

[11] But all who lived in the whole region disregarded the orders of Nebuchadnezzar king of the Assyrians, and refused to join him in the war; for they were not afraid of him, but looked upon him as only one man, and they sent back his messengers empty-handed and shamefaced.

[12] Then Nebuchadnezzar was very angry with this whole region, and swore by his throne and kingdom that he would surely take revenge on the whole territory of Cilicia and Damascus and Syria, that he would kill them by the sword, and also all the inhabitants of the land of Moab, and the people of Ammon, and all Judea, and every one in Egypt, as far as the coasts of the two seas.

[13] In the seventeenth year he led his forces against King Arphaxad, and defeated him in battle, and overthrew the

whole army of Arphaxad, and all his cavalry and all his chariots.

[14] Thus he took possession of his cities, and came to Ecbatana, captured its towers, plundered its markets, and turned its beauty into shame.

[15] He captured Arphaxad in the mountains of Ragae and struck him down with hunting spears; and he utterly destroyed him, to this day.

[16] Then he returned with them to Nineveh, he and all his combined forces, a vast body of troops; and there he and his forces rested and feasted for one hundred and twenty days.

Jdt.2

[1] In the eighteenth year, on the twenty-second day of the first month, there was talk in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar king of the Assyrians about carrying out his revenge on the whole region, just as he said.

[2] He called together all his officers and all his nobles and set forth to them his secret plan and recounted fully, with his own lips, all the wickedness of the region;

[3] and it was decided that every one who had not obeyed his command should be destroyed.

[4] When he had finished setting forth his plan, Nebuchadnezzar king of the Assyrians called Holofernes, the chief general of his army, second only to himself, and said to him,

[5] "Thus says the Great King, the lord of the whole earth: When you leave my presence, take with you men confident in their strength, to the number of one hundred and twenty thousand foot soldiers and twelve thousand cavalry.

[6] Go and attack the whole west country, because they disobeyed my orders.

[7] Tell them to prepare earth and water, for I am coming against them in my anger, and will cover the whole face of the earth with the feet of my armies, and will hand them over to be plundered by my troops,

[8] till their wounded shall fill their valleys, and every brook and river shall be filled with their dead, and overflow;

[9] and I will lead them away captive to the ends of the whole earth.

[10] You shall go and seize all their territory for me in advance. They will yield themselves to you, and you shall hold them for me till the day of their punishment.

[11] But if they refuse, your eye shall not spare and you shall hand them over to slaughter and plunder throughout your whole region.

[12] For as I live, and by the power of my kingdom, what I have spoken my hand will execute.

[13] And you -- take care not to transgress any of your sovereign's commands, but be sure to carry them out just as I have ordered you; and do not delay about it."

[14] So Holofernes left the presence of his master, and called together all the commanders, generals, and officers of the Assyrian army,

[15] and mustered the picked troops by divisions as his lord had ordered him to do, one hundred and twenty thousand of them, together with twelve thousand archers on horseback,

[16] and he organized them as a great army is marshaled for a campaign.

[17] He collected a vast number of camels and asses and mules for transport, and innumerable sheep and oxen and goats for provision;

[18] also plenty of food for every man, and a huge amount of gold and silver from the royal palace.

[19] So he set out with his whole army, to go ahead of King Nebuchadnezzar and to cover the whole face of the earth to the west with their chariots and horsemen and picked troops of infantry.

[20] Along with them went a mixed crowd like a swarm of locusts, like the dust of the earth -- a multitude that could not be counted.

[21] They marched for three days from Nineveh to the plain of Bectileth, and camped opposite Bectileth near the mountain which is to the north of Upper Cilicia.

[22] From there Holofernes took his whole army, his infantry, cavalry, and chariots, and went up into the hill country

[23] and ravaged Put and Lud, and plundered all the people of Rassis and the Ishmaelites who lived along the desert, south of the country of the Chelleans.

[24] Then he followed the Euphrates and passed through Mesopotamia and destroyed all the hilltop cities along the brook Abron, as far as the sea.

[25] He also seized the territory of Cilicia, and killed every one who resisted him, and came to the southern borders of Japheth, fronting toward Arabia.

[26] He surrounded all the Midianites, and burned their tents and plundered their sheepfolds.

[27] Then he went down into the plain of Damascus during the wheat harvest, and burned all their fields and destroyed their flocks and herds and sacked their cities and ravaged their lands and put to death all their young men with the edge of the sword.

[28] So fear and terror of him fell upon all the people who lived along the seacoast, at Sidon and Tyre, and those who

lived in Sur and Ocina and all who lived in Jamnia. Those who lived in Azotus and Ascalon feared him exceedingly.

Jdt.3

- [1] So they sent messengers to sue for peace, and said,
[2] "Behold, we the servants of Nebuchadnezzar, the Great King, lie prostrate before you. Do with us whatever you will.
[3] Behold, our buildings, and all our land, and all our wheat fields, and our flocks and herds, and all our sheepfolds with their tents, lie before you; do with them whatever you please.
[4] Our cities also and their inhabitants are your slaves; come and deal with them in any way that seems good to you."
[5] The men came to Holofernes and told him all this.
[6] Then he went down to the seacoast with his army and stationed garrisons in the hilltop cities and took picked men from them as his allies.
[7] And these people and all in the country round about welcomed him with garlands and dances and tambourines.
[8] And he demolished all their shrines and cut down their sacred groves; for it had been given to him to destroy all the gods of the land, so that all nations should worship Nebuchadnezzar only, and all their tongues and tribes should call upon him as god.
[9] Then he came to the edge of Esdraelon, near Dothan, fronting the great ridge of Judea;
[10] here he camped between Geba and Scythopolis, and remained for a whole month in order to assemble all the supplies for his army.

Jdt.4

[1]

By this time the people of Israel living in Judea heard of everything that Holofernes, the general of Nebuchadnezzar the king of the Assyrians, had done to the nations, and how he had plundered and destroyed all their temples;

[2] they were therefore very greatly terrified at his approach, and were alarmed both for Jerusalem and for the temple of the Lord their God.

[3] For they had only recently returned from the captivity, and all the people of Judea were newly gathered together, and the sacred vessels and the altar and the temple had been consecrated after their profanation.

[4] So they sent to every district of Samaria, and to Kona and Beth-horon and Belmain and Jericho and to Choba and Aesora and the valley of Salem,

[5] and immediately seized all the high hilltops and fortified the villages on them and stored up food in preparation for war -- since their fields had recently been harvested.

[6] And Joakim, the high priest, who was in Jerusalem at the time, wrote to the people of Bethulia and Betomesthaim, which faces Esdraelon opposite the plain near Dothan,

[7] ordering them to seize the passes up into the hills, since by them Judea could be invaded, and it was easy to stop any who tried to enter, for the approach was narrow, only wide enough for two men at the most.

[8] So the Israelites did as Joakim the high priest and the senate of the whole people of Israel, in session at Jerusalem, had given order.

[9] And every man of Israel cried out to God with great fervor, and they humbled themselves with much fasting.

[10] They and their wives and their children and their cattle and every resident alien and hired laborer and purchased slave -- they all girded themselves with sackcloth.

[11] And all the men and women of Israel, and their children, living at Jerusalem, prostrated themselves before the temple and put ashes on their heads and spread out their sackcloth before the Lord.

[12] They even surrounded the altar with sackcloth and cried out in unison, praying earnestly to the God of Israel not to give up their infants as prey and their wives as booty, and the cities they had inherited to be destroyed, and the sanctuary to be profaned and desecrated to the malicious joy of the Gentiles.

[13] So the Lord heard their prayers and looked upon their affliction; for the people fasted many days throughout Judea and in Jerusalem before the sanctuary of the Lord Almighty.

[14] And Joakim the high priest and all the priests who stood before the Lord and ministered to the Lord, with their loins girded with sackcloth, offered the continual burnt offerings and the vows and freewill offerings of the people.

[15] With ashes upon their turbans, they cried out to the Lord with all their might to look with favor upon the whole house of Israel.

Jdt.5

[1] When Holofernes, the general of the Assyrian army, heard that the people of Israel had prepared for war and had closed the passes in the hills and fortified all the high hilltops and set up barricades in the plains,

[2] he was very angry. So he called together all the princes of Moab and the commanders of Ammon and all the governors of the coastland,

[3] and said to them, "Tell me, you Canaanites, what people is this that lives in the hill country? What cities do they inhabit? How large is their army, and in what does their power or strength consist? Who rules over them as king, leading their army?"

[4] And why have they alone, of all who live in the west, refused to come out and meet me?"

[5] Then Achior, the leader of all the Ammonites, said to him, "Let my lord now hear a word from the mouth of your servant, and I will tell you the truth about this people that dwells in the nearby mountain district. No falsehood shall come from your servant's mouth.

[6] This people is descended from the Chaldeans.

[7] At one time they lived in Mesopotamia, because they would not follow the gods of their fathers who were in Chaldea.

[8] For they had left the ways of their ancestors, and they worshiped the God of heaven, the God they had come to know; hence they drove them out from the presence of their gods; and they fled to Mesopotamia, and lived there for a long time.

[9] Then their God commanded them to leave the place where they were living and go to the land of Canaan. There they settled, and prospered, with much gold and silver and very many cattle.

[10] When a famine spread over Canaan they went down to Egypt and lived there as long as they had food; and there they became a great multitude -- so great that they could not be counted.

[11] So the king of Egypt became hostile to them; he took

advantage of them and set them to making bricks, and humbled them and made slaves of them.

[12] Then they cried out to their God, and he afflicted the whole land of Egypt with incurable plagues; and so the Egyptians drove them out of their sight.

[13] Then God dried up the Red Sea before them,

[14] and he led them by the way of Sinai and Kadesh-barnea, and drove out all the people of the wilderness.

[15] So they lived in the land of the Amorites, and by their might destroyed all the inhabitants of Heshbon; and crossing over the Jordan they took possession of all the hill country.

[16] And they drove out before them the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Jebusites and the Shechemites and all the Gergesites, and lived there a long time.

[17] As long as they did not sin against their God they prospered, for the God who hates iniquity is with them.

[18] But when they departed from the way which he had appointed for them, they were utterly defeated in many battles and were led away captive to a foreign country; the temple of their God was razed to the ground, and their cities were captured by their enemies.

[19] But now they have returned to their God, and have come back from the places to which they were scattered, and have occupied Jerusalem, where their sanctuary is, and have settled in the hill country, because it was uninhabited.

[20] Now therefore, my master and lord, if there is any unwitting error in this people and they sin against their God and we find out their offense, then we will go up and defeat them.

[21] But if there is no transgression in their nation, then let my lord pass them by; for their Lord will defend them, and their God will protect them, and we shall be put to shame before the whole world."

[22] When Achior had finished saying this, all the men standing around the tent began to complain; Holofernes' officers and all the men from the seacoast and from Moab insisted that he must be put to death.

[23] "For," they said, "we will not be afraid of the Israelites; they are a people with no strength or power for making war.

[24] Therefore let us go up, Lord Holofernes, and they will be devoured by your vast army."

Jdt.6

[1] When the disturbance made by the men outside the council died down, Holofernes, the commander of the Assyrian army, said to Achior and all the Moabites in the presence of all the foreign contingents:

[2] "And who are you, Achior, and you hirelings of Ephraim, to prophesy among us as you have done today and tell us not to make war against the people of Israel because their God will defend them? Who is God except Nebuchadnezzar?

[3] He will send his forces and will destroy them from the face of the earth, and their God will not deliver them -- we the king's servants will destroy them as one man. They cannot resist the might of our cavalry.

[4] We will burn them up, and their mountains will be drunk with their blood, and their fields will be full of their dead. They cannot withstand us, but will utterly perish. So says King Nebuchadnezzar, the lord of the whole earth. For he has spoken; none of his words shall be in vain.

[5] "But you, Achior, you Ammonite hireling, who have said these words on the day of your iniquity, you shall not see my face again from this day until I take revenge on this race that came out of Egypt.

[6] Then the sword of my army and the spear of my servants shall pierce your sides, and you shall fall among their wounded, when I return.

[7] Now my slaves are going to take you back into the hill country and put you in one of the cities beside the passes,

[8] and you will not die until you perish along with them.

[9] If you really hope in your heart that they will not be taken, do not look downcast! I have spoken and none of my words shall fail."

[10] Then Holofernes ordered his slaves, who waited on him in his tent, to seize Achior and take him to Bethulia and hand him over to the men of Israel.

[11] So the slaves took him and led him out of the camp into the plain, and from the plain they went up into the hill country and came to the springs below Bethulia.

[12] When the men of the city saw them, they caught up their weapons and ran out of the city to the top of the hill, and all the slingers kept them from coming up by casting stones at them.

[13] However, they got under the shelter of the hill and they bound Achior and left him lying at the foot of the hill, and returned to their master.

[14] Then the men of Israel came down from their city and found him; and they untied him and brought him into

Bethulia and placed him before the magistrates of their city,

[15] who in those days were Uzziah the son of Micah, of the tribe of Simeon, and Chabris the son of Gothoniel, and Charmis the son of Melchiel.

[16] They called together all the elders of the city, and all their young men and their women ran to the assembly; and they set Achior in the midst of all their people, and Uzziah asked him what had happened.

[17] He answered and told them what had taken place at the

council of Holofernes, and all that he had said in the presence of the Assyrian leaders, and all that Holofernes had said so boastfully against the house of Israel.

[18] Then the people fell down and worshiped God, and cried out to him, and said,

[19] "O Lord God of heaven, behold their arrogance, and have pity on the humiliation of our people, and look this day upon the faces of those who are consecrated to thee."

[20] Then they consoled Achior, and praised him greatly.

[21] And Uzziah took him from the assembly to his own house and gave a banquet for the elders; and all that night they called on the God of Israel for help.

Jdt.7

[1] The next day Holofernes ordered his whole army, and all the allies who had joined him, to break camp and move against Bethulia, and to seize the passes up into the hill country and make war on the Israelites.

[2] So all their warriors moved their camp that day; their force of men of war was one hundred and seventy thousand infantry and twelve thousand cavalry, together with the baggage and the foot soldiers handling it, a very great multitude.

[3] They encamped in the valley near Bethulia, beside the spring, and they spread out in breadth over Dothan as far as Balbaim and in length from Bethulia to Cyamon, which faces Esdraelon.

[4] When the Israelites saw their vast numbers they were greatly terrified, and every one said to his neighbor, "These men will now lick up the face of the whole land; neither the

high mountains nor the valleys nor the hills will bear their weight."

[5] Then each man took up his weapons, and when they had kindled fires on their towers they remained on guard all that night.

[6] On the second day Holofernes led out all his cavalry in full view of the Israelites in Bethulia,

[7] and examined the approaches to the city, and visited the springs that supplied their water, and seized them and set guards of soldiers over them, and then returned to his army.

[8] Then all the chieftains of the people of Esau and all the leaders of the Moabites and the commanders of the coastland came to him and said,

[9] "Let our lord hear a word, lest his army be defeated.

[10] For these people, the Israelites, do not rely on their spears but on the height of the mountains where they live, for it is not easy to reach the tops of their mountains.

[11] Therefore, my lord, do not fight against them in battle array, and not a man of your army will fall.

[12] Remain in your camp, and keep all the men in your forces with you; only let your servants take possession of the spring of water that flows from the foot of the mountain --

[13] for this is where all the people of Bethulia get their water. So thirst will destroy them, and they will give up their city. We and our people will go up to the tops of the nearby mountains and camp there to keep watch that not a man gets out of the city.

[14] They and their wives and children will waste away with famine, and before the sword reaches them they will be strewn about in the streets where they live.

[15] So you will pay them back with evil, because they rebelled and did not receive you peaceably."

[16] These words pleased Holofernes and all his servants, and he gave orders to do as they had said.

[17] So the army of the Ammonites moved forward, together with five thousand Assyrians, and they encamped in the valley and seized the water supply and the springs of the Israelites.

[18] And the sons of Esau and the sons of Ammon went up and encamped in the hill country opposite Dothan; and they sent some of their men toward the south and the east, toward Acraba, which is near Chusi beside the brook Mochmur. The rest of the Assyrian army encamped in the plain, and covered the whole face of the land, and their tents and supply trains spread out in great number, and they formed a vast multitude.

[19] The people of Israel cried out to the Lord their God, for their courage failed, because all their enemies had surrounded them and there was no way of escape from them.

[20] The whole Assyrian army, their infantry, chariots, and cavalry, surrounded them for thirty-four days, until all the vessels of water belonging to every inhabitant of Bethulia were empty;

[21] their cisterns were going dry, and they did not have enough water to drink their fill for a single day, because it was measured out to them to drink.

[22] Their children lost heart, and the women and young men fainted from thirst and fell down in the streets of the city and in the passages through the gates; there was no strength left in them any longer.

[23] Then all the people, the young men, the women, and the children, gathered about Uzziah and the rulers of the city and cried out with a loud voice, and said before all the elders,

[24] "God be judge between you and us! For you have done us a great injury in not making peace with the Assyrians.

[25] For now we have no one to help us; God has sold us into their hands, to strew us on the ground before them with thirst and utter destruction.

[26] Now call them in and surrender the whole city to the army of Holofernes and to all his forces, to be plundered.

[27] For it would be better for us to be captured by them; for we will be slaves, but our lives will be spared, and we shall not witness the death of our babes before our eyes, or see our wives and children draw their last breath.

[28] We call to witness against you heaven and earth and our God, the Lord of our fathers, who punishes us according to our sins and the sins of our fathers. Let him not do this day the things which we have described!"

[29] Then great and general lamentation arose throughout the assembly, and they cried out to the Lord God with a loud voice.

[30] And Uzziah said to them, "Have courage, my brothers! Let us hold out for five more days; by that time the Lord our God will restore to us his mercy, for he will not forsake us utterly.

[31] But if these days pass by, and no help comes for us, I will do what you say."

[32] Then he dismissed the people to their various posts, and they went up on the walls and towers of their city. The women and children he sent home. And they were greatly depressed in the city.

Jdt.8

[1] At that time Judith heard about these things: she was the daughter of Merari the son of Ox, son of Joseph, son of Oziel, son of Elkiah, son of Ananias, son of Gideon, son of

Raphaim, son of Ahitub, son of Elijah, son of Hilkiyah, son of Eliab, son of Nathanael, son of Salamiel, son of Sarasadai, son of Israel.

[2] Her husband Manasseh, who belonged to her tribe and family, had died during the barley harvest.

[3] For as he stood overseeing the men who were binding sheaves in the field, he was overcome by the burning heat, and took to his bed and died in Bethulia his city. So they buried him with his fathers in the field between Dothan and Balamon.

[4] Judith had lived at home as a widow for three years and four months.

[5] She set up a tent for herself on the roof of her house, and girded sackcloth about her loins and wore the garments of her widowhood.

[6] She fasted all the days of her widowhood, except the day before the sabbath and the sabbath itself, the day before the new moon and the day of the new moon, and the feasts and days of rejoicing of the house of Israel.

[7] She was beautiful in appearance, and had a very lovely face; and her husband Manasseh had left her gold and silver, and men and women slaves, and cattle, and fields; and she maintained this estate.

[8] No one spoke ill of her, for she feared God with great devotion.

[9] When Judith heard the wicked words spoken by the people against the ruler, because they were faint for lack of water, and when she heard all that Uzziah said to them, and how he promised them under oath to surrender the city to the Assyrians after five days,

[10] she sent her maid, who was in charge of all she possessed, to summon Chabris and Charmis, the elders of her city.

[11] They came to her, and she said to them,
"Listen to me, rulers of the people of Bethulia! What you have said to the people today is not right; you have even sworn and pronounced this oath between God and you, promising to surrender the city to our enemies unless the Lord turns and helps us within so many days.

[12] Who are you, that have put God to the test this day, and are setting yourselves up in the place of God among the sons of men?

[13] You are putting the Lord Almighty to the test -- but you will never know anything!

[14] You cannot plumb the depths of the human heart, nor find out what a man is thinking; how do you expect to search out God, who made all these things, and find out his mind or comprehend his thought? No, my brethren, do not provoke the Lord our God to anger.

[15] For if he does not choose to help us within these five days, he has power to protect us within any time he pleases, or even to destroy us in the presence of our enemies.

[16] Do not try to bind the purposes of the Lord our God; for God is not like man, to be threatened, nor like a human being, to be won over by pleading.

[17] Therefore, while we wait for his deliverance, let us call upon him to help us, and he will hear our voice, if it pleases him.

[18] "For never in our generation, nor in these present days, has there been any tribe or family or people or city of ours which worshiped gods made with hands, as was done in days gone by --

[19] and that was why our fathers were handed over to the sword, and to be plundered, and so they suffered a great catastrophe before our enemies.

[20] But we know no other god but him, and therefore we

hope that he will not disdain us or any of our nation.

[21] For if we are captured all Judea will be captured and our sanctuary will be plundered; and he will exact of us the penalty for its desecration.

[22] And the slaughter of our brethren and the captivity of the land and the desolation of our inheritance -- all this he will bring upon our heads among the Gentiles, wherever we serve as slaves; and we shall be an offense and a reproach in the eyes of those who acquire us.

[23] For our slavery will not bring us into favor, but the Lord our God will turn it to dishonor.

[24] "Now therefore, brethren, let us set an example to our brethren, for their lives depend upon us, and the sanctuary and the temple and the altar rest upon us.

[25] In spite of everything let us give thanks to the Lord our God, who is putting us to the test as he did our forefathers.

[26] Remember what he did with Abraham, and how he tested Isaac, and what happened to Jacob in Mesopotamia in Syria, while he was keeping the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother.

[27] For he has not tried us with fire, as he did them, to search their hearts, nor has he taken revenge upon us; but the Lord scourges those who draw near to him, in order to admonish them."

[28] Then Uzziah said to her, "All that you have said has been spoken out of a true heart, and there is no one who can deny your words.

[29] Today is not the first time your wisdom has been shown, but from the beginning of your life all the people have recognized your understanding, for your heart's disposition is right.

[30] But the people were very thirsty, and they compelled us to do for them what we have promised, and made us take an

oath which we cannot break.

[31] So pray for us, since you are a devout woman, and the Lord will send us rain to fill our cisterns and we will no longer be faint."

[32] Judith said to them, "Listen to me. I am about to do a thing which will go down through all generations of our descendants.

[33] Stand at the city gate tonight, and I will go out with my maid; and within the days after which you have promised to surrender the city to our enemies, the Lord will deliver Israel by my hand.

[34] Only, do not try to find out what I plan; for I will not tell you until I have finished what I am about to do."

[35] Uzziah and the rulers said to her, "Go in peace, and may the Lord God go before you, to take revenge upon our enemies."

[36] So they returned from the tent and went to their posts.

Jdt.9

[1] Then Judith fell upon her face, and put ashes on her head, and uncovered the sackcloth she was wearing; and at the very time when that evening's incense was being offered in the house of God in Jerusalem, Judith cried out to the Lord with a loud voice, and said,

[2] "O Lord God of my father Simeon, to whom thou gavest a sword to take revenge on the strangers who had loosed the girdle of a virgin to defile her, and uncovered her thigh to put her to shame, and polluted her womb to disgrace her; for thou hast said, 'It shall not be done' -- yet they did it.

[3] So thou gavest up their rulers to be slain, and their bed, which was ashamed of the deceit they had practiced, to be

stained with blood, and thou didst strike down slaves along with princes, and princes on their thrones;

[4] and thou gavest their wives for a prey and their daughters to captivity, and all their booty to be divided among thy beloved sons, who were zealous for thee, and abhorred the pollution of their blood, and called on thee for help -- O God, my God, hear me also, a widow.

[5] "For thou hast done these things and those that went before and those that followed; thou hast designed the things that are now, and those that are to come. Yea, the things thou didst intend came to pass,

[6] and the things thou didst will presented themselves and said, 'Lo, we are here'; for all they ways are prepared in advance, and thy judgment is with foreknowledge.

[7] "Behold now, the Assyrians are increased in their might; they are exalted, with their horses and riders; they glory in the strength of their foot soldiers; they trust in shield and spear, in bow and sling, and know not that thou art the Lord who crushest wars; the Lord is thy name.

[8] Break their strength by thy might, and bring down their power in thy anger; for they intend to defile thy sanctuary, and to pollute the tabernacle where thy glorious name rests, and to cast down the horn of thy altar with the sword.

[9] Behold their pride, and send thy wrath upon their heads; give to me, a widow, the strength to do what I plan.

[10] By the deceit of my lips strike down the slave with the prince and the prince with his servant; crush their arrogance by the hand of a woman.

[11] "For thy power depends not upon numbers, nor thy might upon men of strength; for thou art God of the lowly, helper of the oppressed, upholder of the weak, protector of the forlorn, savior of those without hope.

[12] Hear, O hear me, God of my father, God of the inheritance of Israel, Lord of heaven and earth, Creator of the waters, King of all thy creation, hear my prayer!

[13] Make my deceitful words to be their wound and stripe, for they have planned cruel things against thy covenant, and against thy consecrated house, and against the top of Zion, and against the house possessed by thy children.

[14] And cause thy whole nation and every tribe to know and understand that thou art God, the God of all power and might, and that there is no other who protects the people of Israel but thou alone!"

Jdt.10

[1] When Judith had ceased crying out to the God of Israel, and had ended all these words,

[2] she rose from where she lay prostrate and called her maid and went down into the house where she lived on sabbaths and on her feast days;

[3] and she removed the sackcloth which she had been wearing, and took off her widow's garments, and bathed her body with water, and anointed herself with precious ointment, and combed her hair and put on a tiara, and arrayed herself in her gayest apparel, which she used to wear while her husband Manasseh was living.

[4] And she put sandals on her feet, and put on her anklets and bracelets and rings, and her earrings and all her ornaments, and made herself very beautiful, to entice the eyes of all men who might see her.

[5] And she gave her maid a bottle of wine and a flask of oil, and filled a bag with parched grain and a cake of dried fruit and fine bread; and she wrapped up all her vessels and gave

them to her to carry.

[6] Then they went out to the city gate of Bethulia, and found Uzziah standing there with the elders of the city, Chabris and Charmis.

[7] When they saw her, and noted how her face was altered and her clothing changed, they greatly admired her beauty, and said to her,

[8] "May the God of our fathers grant you favor and fulfil your plans, that the people of Israel may glory and Jerusalem may be exalted." And she worshiped God.

[9] Then she said to them, "Order the gate of the city to be opened for me, and I will go out and accomplish the things about which you spoke with me." So they ordered the young men to open the gate for her, as she had said.

[10] When they had done this, Judith went out, she and her maid with her; and the men of the city watched her until she had gone down the mountain and passed through the valley and they could no longer see her.

[11] The women went straight on through the valley; and an Assyrian patrol met her

[12] and took her into custody, and asked her, "To what people do you belong, and where are you coming from, and where are you going?" She replied, "I am a daughter of the Hebrews, but I am fleeing from them, for they are about to be handed over to you to be devoured.

[13] I am on my way to the presence of Holofernes the commander of your army, to give him a true report; and I will show him a way by which he can go and capture all the hill country without losing one of his men, captured or slain."

[14] When the men heard her words, and observed her face - - she was in their eyes marvelously beautiful -- they said to her,

[15] "You have saved your life by hurrying down to the presence of our lord. Go at once to his tent; some of us will escort you and hand you over to him.

[16] And when you stand before him, do not be afraid in your heart, but tell him just what you have said, and he will treat you well."

[17] They chose from their number a hundred men to accompany her and her maid, and they brought them to the tent of Holofernes.

[18] There was great excitement in the whole camp, for her arrival was reported from tent to tent, and they came and stood around her as she waited outside the tent of Holofernes while they told him about her.

[19] And they marveled at her beauty, and admired the Israelites, judging them by her, and every one said to his neighbor, "Who can despise these people, who have women like this among them? Surely not a man of them had better be left alive, for if we let them go they will be able to ensnare the whole world!"

[20] Then Holofernes' companions and all his servants came out and led her into the tent.

[21] Holofernes was resting on his bed, under a canopy which was woven with purple and gold and emeralds and precious stones.

[22] When they told him of her he came forward to the front of the tent, with silver lamps carried before him.

[23] And when Judith came into the presence of Holofernes and his servants, they all marveled at the beauty of her face; and she prostrated herself and made obeisance to him, and his slaves raised her up.

Jdt.11

[1] Then Holofernes said to her, "Take courage, woman, and do not be afraid in your heart, for I have never hurt any one who chose to serve Nebuchadnezzar, the king of all the earth.

[2] And even now, if your people who live in the hill country had not slighted me, I would never have lifted my spear against them; but they have brought all this on themselves.

[3] And now tell me why you have fled from them and have come over to us -- since you have come to safety.

[4] Have courage; you will live, tonight and from now on. No one will hurt you, but all will treat you well, as they do the servants of my lord King Nebuchadnezzar."

[5] Judith replied to him, "Accept the words of your servant, and let your maidservant speak in your presence, and I will tell nothing false to my lord this night.

[6] And if you follow out the words of your maidservant, God will accomplish something through you, and my lord will not fail to achieve his purposes.

[7] Nebuchadnezzar the king of the whole earth lives, and as his power endures, who had sent you to direct every living soul, not only do men serve him because of you, but also the beasts of the field and the cattle and the birds of the air will live by your power under Nebuchadnezzar and all his house.

[8] For we have heard of your wisdom and skill, and it is reported throughout the whole world that you are the one good man in the whole kingdom, thoroughly informed and marvelous in military strategy.

[9] "Now as for the things Achior said in your council, we have heard his words, for the men of Bethulia spared him and he told them all he had said to you.

[10] Therefore, my lord and master, do not disregard what he said, but keep it in your mind, for it is true: our nation cannot be punished, nor can the sword prevail against them, unless they sin against their God.

[11] "And now, in order that my lord may not be defeated and his purpose frustrated, death will fall upon them, for a sin has overtaken them by which they are about to provoke their God to anger when they do what is wrong.

[12] Since their food supply is exhausted and their water has almost given out, they have planned to kill their cattle and have determined to use all that God by his laws has forbidden them to eat.

[13] They have decided to consume the first fruits of the grain and the tithes of the wine and oil, which they had consecrated and set aside for the priests who minister in the presence of our God at Jerusalem -- although it is not lawful for any of the people so much as to touch these things with their hands.

[14] They have sent men to Jerusalem, because even the people living there have been doing this, to bring back to them permission from the senate.

[15] When the word reaches them and they proceed to do this, on that very day they will be handed over to you to be destroyed.

[16] "Therefore, when I, your servant, learned all this, I fled from them; and God has sent me to accomplish with you things that will astonish the whole world, as many as shall hear about them.

[17] For your servant is religious, and serves the God of heaven day and night; therefore, my lord, I will remain with you, and every night your servant will go out into the valley, and I will pray to God and he will tell me when they have committed their sins.

[18] And I will come and tell you, and then you shall go out with your whole army, and not one of them will withstand you.

[19] Then I will lead you through the middle of Judea, till you come to Jerusalem; and I will set your throne in the midst of it; and you will lead them like sheep that have no shepherd, and not a dog will so much as open its mouth to growl at you. For this has been told me, by my foreknowledge; it was announced to me, and I was sent to tell you."

[20] Her words pleased Holofernes and all his servants, and they marveled at her wisdom and said,

[21] "There is not such a woman from one end of the earth to the other, either for beauty of face or wisdom of speech!"

[22] And Holofernes said to her, "God has done well to send you before the people, to lend strength to our hands and to bring destruction upon those who have slighted my lord.

[23] You are not only beautiful in appearance, but wise in speech; and if you do as you have said, your God shall be my God, and you shall live in the house of King Nebuchadnezzar and be renowned throughout the whole world."

Jdt.12

[1] Then he commanded them to bring her in where his silver dishes were kept, and ordered them to set a table for her with some of his own food and to serve her with his own wine.

[2] But Judith said, "I cannot eat it, lest it be an offense; but I will be provided from the things I have brought with me."

[3] Holofernes said to her, "If your supply runs out, where can we get more like it for you? For none of your people is

here with us."

[4] Judith replied, "As your soul lives, my lord, your servant will not use up the things I have with me before the Lord carries out by my hand what he has determined to do."

[5] Then the servants of Holofernes brought her into the tent, and she slept until midnight. Along toward the morning watch she arose

[6] and sent to Holofernes and said, "Let my lord now command that your servant be permitted to go out and pray."

[7] So Holofernes commanded his guards not to hinder her. And she remained in the camp for three days, and went out each night to the valley of Bethulia, and bathed at the spring in the camp.

[8] When she came up from the spring she prayed the Lord God of Israel to direct her way for the raising up of her people.

[9] So she returned clean and stayed in the tent until she ate her food toward evening.

[10] On the fourth day Holofernes held a banquet for his slave only, and did not invite any of his officers.

[11] And he said to Bagoas, the eunuch who had charge of his personal affairs, "Go now and persuade the Hebrew woman who is in your care to join us and eat and drink with us.

[12] For it will be a disgrace if we let such a woman go without enjoying her company, for if we do not embrace her she will laugh at us."

[13] So Bagoas went out from the presence of Holofernes, and approached her and said, "This beautiful maidservant will please come to my lord and be honored in his presence, and drink wine and be merry with us, and become today like one of the daughters of the Assyrians who serve in the house

of Nebuchadnezzar."

[14] And Judith said, "Who am I, to refuse my lord? Surely whatever pleases him I will do at once, and it will be a joy to me until the day of my death!"

[15] So she got up and arrayed herself in all her woman's finery, and her maid went and spread on the ground for her before Holofernes the soft fleeces which she had received from Bagoas for her daily use, so that she might recline on them when she ate.

[16] Then Judith came in and lay down, and Holofernes' heart was ravished with her and he was moved with great desire to possess her; for he had been waiting for an opportunity to deceive her, ever since the day he first saw her.

[17] So Holofernes said to her. "Drink now, and be merry with us!"

[18] Judith said, "I will drink now, my lord, because my life means more to me today than in all the days since I was born."

[19] Then she took and ate and drank before him what her maid had prepared.

[20] And Holofernes was greatly pleased with her, and drank a great quantity of wine, much more than he had ever drunk in any one day since he was born.

Jdt.13

[1] When evening came, his slaves quickly withdrew, and Bagoas closed the tent from outside and shut out the attendants from his master's presence; and they went to bed, for they all were weary because the banquet had lasted long.

[2] So Judith was left alone in the tent , with Holofernes stretched out on his bed, for he was overcome with wine.

[3] Now Judith had told her maid to stand outside the bedchamber and to wait for her to come out, as she did every day; for she said she would be going out for her prayers. And she had said the same thing to Bagoas.

[4] So every one went out, and no one, either small or great, was left in the bedchamber. Then Judith, standing beside his bed, said in her heart, "O Lord God of all might, look in this hour upon the work of my hands for the exaltation of Jerusalem.

[5] For now is the time to help thy inheritance, and to carry out my undertaking for the destruction of the enemies who have risen up against us."

[6] She went up to the post at the end of the bed, above Holofernes' head, and took down his sword that hung there.

[7] She came close to his bed and took hold of the hair of his head, and said, "Give me strength this day, O Lord God of Israel!"

[8] And she struck his neck twice with all her might, and severed it from his body.

[9] Then she tumbled his body off the bed and pulled down the canopy from the posts; after a moment she went out, and gave Holofernes' head to her maid,

[10] who placed it in her food bag.

Then the two of them went out together, as they were accustomed to go for prayer; and they passed through the camp and circled around the valley and went up the mountain to Bethulia and came to its gates.

[11] Judith called out from afar to the watchmen at the gates, "Open, open the gate! God, our God, is still with us, to show his power in Israel, and his strength against our enemies, even as he has done this day!"

[12] When the men of her city heard her voice, they hurried down to the city gate and called together the elders of the city.

[13] They all ran together, both small and great, for it was unbelievable that she had returned; they opened the gate and admitted them, and they kindled a fire for light, and gathered around them.

[14] Then she said to them with a loud voice, "Praise God, O praise him! Praise God, who has not withdrawn his mercy from the house of Israel, but has destroyed our enemies by my hand this very night!"

[15] Then she took the head out of the bag and showed it to them, and said, "See, here is the head of Holofernes, the commander of the Assyrian army, and here is the canopy beneath which he lay in his drunken stupor. The Lord has struck him down by the hand of a woman.

[16] As the Lord lives, who has protected me in the way I went, it was my face that tricked him to his destruction, and yet he committed no act of sin with me, to defile and shame me."

[17] All the people were greatly astonished, and bowed down and worshiped God, and said with one accord, "Blessed art thou, our God, who hast brought into contempt this day the enemies of thy people."

[18] And Uzziah said to her, "O daughter, you are blessed by the Most High God above all women on earth; and blessed be the Lord God, who created the heavens and the earth, who has guided you to strike the head of the leader of our enemies.

[19] Your hope will never depart from the hearts of men, as they remember the power of God.

[20] May God grant this to be a perpetual honor to you, and may he visit you with blessings, because you did not spare

your own life when our nation was brought low, but have avenged our ruin, walking in the straight path before our God." And all the people said, "So be it, so be it!"

Jdt.14

[1] Then Judith said to them, "Listen to me, my brethren, and take this head and hang it upon the parapet of your wall.

[2] And as soon as morning comes and the sun rises, let every valiant man take his weapons and go out of the city, and set a captain over them, as if you were going down to the plain against the Assyrian outpost; only do not go down.

[3] Then they will seize their arms and go into the camp and rouse the officers of the Assyrian army; and they will rush into the tent of Holofernes, and will not find him. Then fear will come over them, and they will flee before you,

[4] and you and all who live within the borders of Israel shall pursue them and cut them down as they flee.

[5] But before you do all this, bring Achior the Ammonite to me, and let him see and recognize the man who despised the house of Israel and sent him to us as if to his death."

[6] So they summoned Achior from the house of Uzziah. And when he came and saw the head of Holofernes in the hand of one of the men at the gathering of the people, he fell down on his face and his spirit failed him.

[7] And when they raised him up he fell at Judith's feet, and knelt before her, and said, "Blessed are you in every tent of Judah! In every nation those who hear your name will be alarmed.

[8] Now tell me what you have done during these days." Then Judith described to him in the presence of the people all that she had done, from the day she left until the moment of

her speaking to them.

And when she had finished, the people raised a great shout and made a joyful noise in their city.

[10] And when Achior saw all that the God of Israel had done, he believed firmly in God, and was circumcised, and joined the house of Israel, remaining so to this day.

[11] As soon as it was dawn they hung the head of Holofernes on the wall, and every man took his weapons, and they went out in companies to the passes in the mountains.

[12] And when the Assyrians saw them they sent word to their commanders, and they went to the generals and the captains and to all their officers.

[13] So they came to Holofernes' tent and said to the steward in charge of all his personal affairs, "Wake up our lord, for the slaves have been so bold as to come down against us to give battle, in order to be destroyed completely."

[14] So Bagoas went in and knocked at the door of the tent, for he supposed that he was sleeping with Judith.

[15] But when no one answered, he opened it and went into the bedchamber and found him thrown down on the platform dead, with his head cut off and missing.

[16] And he cried out with a loud voice and wept and groaned and shouted, and rent his garments.

[17] Then he went to the tent where Judith had stayed, and when he did not find her he rushed out to the people and shouted,

[18] "The slaves have tricked us! One Hebrew woman has brought disgrace upon the house of King Nebuchadnezzar! For look, here is Holofernes lying on the ground, and his head is not on him!"

[19] When the leaders of the Assyrian army heard this, they

rent their tunics and were greatly dismayed, and their loud cries and shouts arose in the midst of the camp.

Jdt.15

[1] When the men in the tents heard it, they were amazed at what had happened.

[2] Fear and trembling came over them, so that they did not wait for one another, but with one impulse all rushed out and fled by every path across the plain and through the hill country.

[3] Those who had camped in the hills around Bethulia also took to flight. Then the men of Israel, every one that was a soldier, rushed out upon them.

[4] And Uzziah sent men to Betomasthaim and Bebai and Choba and Kola, and to all the frontiers of Israel, to tell what had taken place and to urge all to rush out upon their enemies to destroy them.

[5] And when the Israelites heard it, with one accord they fell upon the enemy, and cut them down as far as Choba. Those in Jerusalem and all the hill country also came, for they were told what had happened in the camp of the enemy; and those in Gilead and in Galilee outflanked them with great slaughter, even beyond Damascus and its borders.

[6] The rest of the people of Bethulia fell upon the Assyrian camp and plundered it, and were greatly enriched.

[7] And the Israelites, when they returned from the slaughter, took possession of what remained, and the villages and towns in the hill country and in the plain got a great amount of booty, for there was a vast quantity of it.

[8] Then Joakim the high priest, and the senate of the people of Israel who lived at Jerusalem, came to witness the good

things which the Lord had done for Israel, and to see Judith and to greet her.

[9] And when they met her they all blessed her with one accord and said to her, "You are the exaltation of Jerusalem, you are the great glory of Israel, you are the great pride of our nation!

[10] You have done all this singlehanded; you have done great good to Israel, and God is well pleased with it. May the Almighty Lord bless you for ever!" And all the people said, "So be it!"

[11] So all the people plundered the camp for thirty days. They gave Judith the tent of Holofernes and all his silver dishes and his beds and his bowls and all his furniture; and she took them and loaded her mule and hitched up her carts and piled the things on them.

[12] Then all the women of Israel gathered to see her, and blessed her, and some of them performed a dance for her; and she took branches in her hands and gave them to the women who were with her;

[13] and they crowned themselves with olive wreaths, she and those who were with her; and she went before all the people in the dance, leading all the women, while all the men of Israel followed, bearing their arms and wearing garlands and with songs on their lips.

Jdt.16

[1] Then Judith began this thanksgiving before all Israel, and all the people loudly sang this song of praise.

[2] And Judith said, Begin a song to my God with tambourines,
sing to my Lord with cymbals.

Raise to him a new psalm;
exalt him, and call upon his name.

[3] For God is the Lord who crushes wars;
for he has delivered me out of the hands of my pursuers,
and brought me to his camp, in the midst of the people.

[4] The Assyrian came down from the mountains of the
north;

he came with myriads of his warriors;
their multitude blocked up the valleys,
their cavalry covered the hills.

[5] He boasted that he would burn up my territory,
and kill my young men with the sword,
and dash my infants to the ground
and seize my children as prey,
and take my virgins as booty.

[6] But the Lord Almighty has foiled them
by the hand of a woman.

[7] For their mighty one did not fall by the hands
of the young men,

nor did the sons of the Titans smite him,
nor did tall giants set upon him;
but Judith the daughter of Merari undid him
with the beauty of her countenance.

[8] For she took off her widow's mourning
to exalt the oppressed in Israel.

She anointed her face with ointment
and fastened her hair with a tiara
and put on a linen gown to deceive him.

[9] Her sandal ravished his eyes,
her beauty captivated his mind,
and the sword severed his neck.

[10] The Persians trembled at her boldness,
the Medes were daunted at her daring.

[11] Then my oppressed people shouted for joy;
my weak people shouted and the enemy trembled;
they lifted up their voices, and the enemy were turned back.

[12] The sons of maidservants have pierced them through;
they were wounded like the children of fugitives,
they perished before the army of my Lord.

[13] I will sing to my God a new song:
O Lord, thou are great and glorious,
wonderful in strength, invincible.

[14] Let all thy creatures serve thee,
for thou didst speak, and they were made.
Thou didst send forth thy Spirit, and it formed them;
there is none that can resist thy voice.

[15] For the mountains shall be shaken to their
foundations with the waters;
at thy presence the rocks shall melt like wax,
but to those who fear thee
thou wilt continue to show mercy.

[16] For every sacrifice as a fragrant offering is a small thing,
and all fat for burnt offerings to thee is
a very little thing,
but he who fears the Lord shall be great for ever.

[17] Woe to the nations that rise up against my people!
The Lord Almighty will take vengeance on them
in the day of judgment;
fire and worms he will give to their flesh;
they shall weep in pain for ever.

[18] When they arrived at Jerusalem they worshiped God. As
soon as the people were purified, they offered their burnt
offerings, their freewill offerings, and their gifts.

[19] Judith also dedicated to God all the vessels of Holofernes, which the people had given her; and the canopy which she took for herself from his bedchamber she gave as a votive offering to the Lord.

[20] So the people continued feasting in Jerusalem before the sanctuary for three months, and Judith remained with them.

[21] After this every one returned home to his own inheritance, and Judith went to Bethulia, and remained on her estate, and was honored in her time throughout the whole country.

[22] Many desired to marry her, but she remained a widow all the days of her life after Manasseh her husband died and was gathered to his people.

[23] She became more and more famous, and grew old in her husband's house, until she was one hundred and five years old. She set her maid free. She died in Bethulia, and they buried her in the cave of her husband Manasseh,

[24] and the house of Israel mourned for her seven days. Before she died she distributed her property to all those who were next of kin to her husband Manasseh, and to her own nearest kindred.

[25] And no one ever again spread terror among the people of Israel in the days of Judith, or for a long time after her death.