

JUDITH

¹ Now Arphaxad king of the Medes had brought many nations under his dominions, and he built a very strong city, which he called Ecbatana, ² Of stones squared and hewed: he made the walls thereof seventy cubits broad, and thirty cubits high, and the towers thereof he made a hundred cubits high. But on the square of them, each side was extended the space of twenty feet. ³ And he made the gates thereof according to the height of the towers: ⁴ And he gloried as a mighty one in the force of his army and in the glory of his chariots. ⁵ Now in the twelfth year of his reign, Nabuchodonosor king of the Assyrians, who reigned in Ninive the great city, fought against Arphaxad and overcame him, ⁶ In the great plain which is called Ragua, about the Euphrates, and the Tigris, and the Jadason, in the plain of Erioch the king of the Elicians. ⁷ Then was the kingdom of Nabuchodonosor exalted, and his heart was elevated: and he sent to all that dwelt in Cilicia and Damascus, and Libanus, ⁸ And to the nations that are in Carmelus, and Cedar, and to the inhabitants of Galilee in the great plain of Asdrelon, ⁹ And to all that were in Samaria, and beyond the river Jordan even to Jerusalem, and all the land of Jesse till you come to the borders of Ethiopia. ¹⁰ To all these Nabuchodonosor king of the Assyrians, sent messengers: ¹¹ But they all with one mind refused, and sent them back empty, and rejected them

without honour. ¹² Then king Nabuchodonosor being angry against all that land, swore by his throne and kingdom that he would revenge himself of all those countries.

2

¹ In the thirteenth year of the reign of Nabuchodonosor, the two and twentieth day of the first month, the word was given out in the house of Nabuchodonosor king of the Assyrians, that he would revenge himself. ² And he called all the ancients, and all the governors, and his officers of war, and communicated to them the secret of his counsel: ³ And he said that his thoughts were to bring all the earth under his empire. ⁴ And when this saying pleased them all, Nabuchodonosor, the king, called Holofernes the general of his armies, ⁵ And said to him: Go out against all the kingdoms of the west, and against them especially that despised my commandment. ⁶ Thy eye shall not spare any kingdom, and all the strong cities thou shalt bring under my yoke. ⁷ Then Holofernes called the captains and officers of the power of the Assyrians: and he mustered men for the expedition, as the king commanded him, a hundred and twenty thousand fighting men on foot, and twelve thousand archers, horsemen. ⁸ And he made all his warlike preparations to go before with a multitude of innumerable camels, with all provisions sufficient for the armies in abundance, and herds of oxen, and flocks of sheep, without number. ⁹ He appointed corn to be prepared out of all Syria in his passage. ¹⁰ But gold and silver he took out of

the king's house in great abundance. ¹¹ And he went forth he and all the army, with the chariots, and horsemen, and archers, who covered the face of the earth, like locusts. ¹² And when he had passed through the borders of the Assyrians, he came to the great mountains of Ange, which are on the left of Cilicia: and he went up to all their castles, and took all the strong places. ¹³ And he took by assault the renowned city of Melothus, and pillaged all the children of Tharsis, and the children of Ismahel, who were over against the face of the desert, and on the south of the land of Cellon. ¹⁴ And he passed over the Euphrates and came into Mesopotamia: and he forced all the stately cities that were there, from the torrent of Mambre, till one comes to the sea: ¹⁵ And he took the borders thereof from Cilicia to the coasts of Japheth, which are towards the south. ¹⁶ And he carried away all the children of Madian, and stripped them of all their riches, and all that resisted him he slew with the edge of the sword. ¹⁷ And after these things he went down into the plains of Damascus in the days of the harvest, and he set all the corn on fire, and he caused all the trees and vineyards to be cut down. ¹⁸ And the fear of them fell upon alit the inhabitants of the land.

3

¹ Then the kings and the princes of all the cities and provinces, of Syria, Mesopotamia, and Syria Sobal, and Libya, and Cilicia sent their ambassadors, who coming to Holofernes, said: ² Let thy indignation towards us cease: for it is better for us

to live and serve Nabuchodonosor the great king, and be subject to thee, than to die and to perish, or suffer the miseries of slavery. ³ All our cities and our possessions, all mountains and hills, and fields, and herds of oxen, and flocks of cheep, and goats, and horses, and camels, and all our goods, and families are in thy sight: ⁴ Let all we have be subject to thy law. ⁵ Both we and our children are thy servants. ⁶ Come to us a peaceable lord, and use our service as it shall please thee. ⁷ Then he came down from the mountains with horsemen, in great power, and made himself master of every city, and all the inhabitants of the land. ⁸ And from all the cities he took auxiliaries valiant men, and chosen for war. ⁹ And so great a fear lay upon all those provinces, that the inhabitants of all the cities, both princes and nobles, as well as the people, went out to meet him at his coming. ¹⁰ And received him with garlands, and lights, and dances, and tumbrels, and flutes. ¹¹ And though they did these things, they could not for all that mitigate the fierceness of his heart: ¹² For he both destroyed their cities and cut down their groves. ¹³ For Nabuchodonosor the king had commanded him to destroy all the gods of the earth, that he only might be called God by those nations which could be brought under him by the power of Holofernes. ¹⁴ And when he had passed through all Syria Sobal, and all Apamea, and all Mesopotamia, he came to the Idumeans into the land of Gabaa, ¹⁵ And he took possession of their cities, and stayed there for thirty days, in which days he commanded all the troops of his army to

be united.

4

¹ Then the children of Israel, who dwelt in the land of Juda, hearing these things, were exceedingly afraid of him. ² Dread and horror seized upon their minds, lest he should do the same to Jerusalem and to the temple of the Lord, that he had done to other cities and their temples. ³ And they sent into all Samaria round about, as far as Jericho, and seized upon all the tops of the mountains: ⁴ And they compassed their towns with walls, and gathered together corn for provision for war. ⁵ And Eliachim the priest wrote to all that were over against Esdrelon, which faceth the great plain near Dothain, and to all by whom there might be a passage of way, that they should take possession of the ascents of the mountains, by which there might be any way to Jerusalem, and should keep watch where the way was narrow between the mountains. ⁶ And the children of Israel did as the priest of the Lord Eliachim had appointed them, ⁷ And all the people cried to the Lord with great earnestness, and they humbled their souls in fastings, and prayers, both they and their wives. ⁸ And the priests put on haircloths, and they caused the little children to lie prostrate before the temple of the Lord, and the altar of the Lord they covered with haircloth. ⁹ And they cried to the Lord the God of Israel with one accord, that their children might not be made a prey, and their wives carried off, and their cities destroyed, and their holy things profaned, and that they might

not be made a reproach to the Gentiles. ¹⁰ Then Eliachim the high priest of the Lord went about all Israel and spoke to them, ¹¹ Saying: Know ye that the Lord will hear your prayers, if you continue with perseverance in fastings and prayers in the sight of the Lord. ¹² Remember Moses the servant of the Lord, who overcame Amalec that trusted in his own strength, and in his power, and in his army, and in his shields, and in his chariots, and in his horsemen, not by fighting with the sword, but by holy prayers: ¹³ So shall all the enemies of Israel be, if you persevere in this work which you have begun. ¹⁴ So they being moved by this exhortation of his, prayed to the Lord, and continued in the sight of the Lord. ¹⁵ So that even they who offered the holocausts to the Lord, offered the sacrifices to the Lord girded with haircloths, and with ashes upon their head. ¹⁶ And they all begged of God with all their heart, that he would visit his people Israel.

5

¹ And it was told Holofernes the general of the army of the Assyrians, that the children of Israel prepared themselves to resist, and had shut up the ways of the mountains. ² And he was transported with exceeding great fury and indignation, and he called all the princes of Moab and the leaders of Amman. ³ And he said to them: Tell me what is this people that besetteth the mountains: or what are their cities, and of what sort, and how great: also what is their power, or what is their multitude: or who is the king over their warfare: ⁴ And why

they above all that dwell in the east, have despised us, and have not come out to meet us, that they might receive us with peace? ⁵ Then Achior captain of all the children of Ammon answering, said: If thou vouch safe, my lord, to hear, I will tell the truth in thy sight concerning this people, that dwelleth in the mountains, and there shall not a false word come out of my mouth. ⁶ This people is of the offspring of the Chaldeans. ⁷ They dwelt first in Mesopotamia, because they would not follow the gods of their fathers, who were in the land of the Chaldeans. ⁸ Wherefore forsaking the ceremonies of their fathers, which consisted in the worship of many gods, ⁹ They worshipped one God of heaven, who also commanded them to depart from thence, and to dwell in Charan. And when there was a famine over all the land, they went down into Egypt, and there for four hundred years were so multiplied, that the army of them could not be numbered. ¹⁰ And when the king of Egypt oppressed them, and made slaves of them to labour in clay and brick, in the building of his cities, they cried to their Lord, and he struck the whole land of Egypt with divers plagues. ¹¹ And when the Egyptians had cast them out from them, and the plague had ceased from them, and they had a mind to take them again, and bring them back to their service, ¹² The God of heaven opened the sea to them in their flight, so that the waters were made to stand firm as a wall on either side, and they walked through the bottom of the sea and passed it dry foot. ¹³ And when an innumerable army of the Egyptians pursued after them

in that place, they were so overwhelmed with the waters, that there was not one left, to tell what had happened to posterity. ¹⁴ And after they came out of the Red Sea, they abode in the deserts of mount Sina, in which never man could dwell, or son of man rested. ¹⁵ There bitter fountains were made sweet for them to drink, and for forty years they received food from heaven. ¹⁶ Wheresoever they went in without bow and arrow, and without shield and sword, their God fought for them and overcame. ¹⁷ And there was no one that triumphed over this people, but when they departed from the worship of the Lord their God. ¹⁸ But as often as beside their own God, they worshipped any other, they were given to spoil, and to the sword, and to reproach. ¹⁹ And as often as they were penitent for having revolted from the worship of their God, the God of heaven gave them power to resist. ²⁰ So they overthrew the king of the Chanaanites, and of the Jebusites, and of the Pherezites, and of the Hethites, and of the Hevites, and of the Amorrhites, and all the mighty ones in Hesebon, and they possessed their lands, and their cities: ²¹ And as long as they sinned not in the sight of their God, it was well with them: for their God hateth iniquity. ²² And even some years ago when they had revolted from the way which God had given them to walk therein, they were destroyed in battles by many nations, and very many of them were led away captive into a strange land. ²³ But of late returning to the Lord their God, from the different places wherein they were scattered, they are come together and

are gone up into all these mountains, and possess Jerusalem again, where their holies are. ²⁴ Now therefore, my lord, search if there be any iniquity of theirs in the sight of their God: let us go up to them, because their God will surely deliver them to thee, and they shall be brought under the yoke of thy power: ²⁵ But if there be no offense of this people in the sight of their God, we can not resist them, because their God will defend them: and we shall be a reproach to the whole earth. ²⁶ And it came to pass, when Achior had ceased to speak these words, all the great men of Holofernes were angry, and they had a mind to kill him, saying to each other: ²⁷ Who is this, that saith the children of Israel can resist king Nabuchodonosor, and his armies, men unarmed, and without force, and without skill in the art of war? ²⁸ That Achior therefore may know that he deceiveth us, let us go up into the mountains: and when the bravest of them shall be taken, then shall he with them be stabbed with the sword: ²⁹ That every nation may know that Nabuchodonosor is god of the earth, and besides him there is no other.

6

¹ And it came to pass when they had left off speaking, that Holofernes being in a violent passion, said to Achior: ² Because thou hast prophesied unto us, saying: That the nation of Israel is defended by their God, to shew thee that there is no God, but Nabuchodonosor: ³ When we shall slay them all as one man, then thou also shalt die with them by the sword of the Assyrians, and all

Israel shall perish with thee: ⁴ And thou shalt find that Nabuchodonosor is lord of the whole earth: and then the sword of my soldiers shall pass through thy sides, and thou shalt be stabbed and fall among the wounded of Israel, and thou shalt breathe no more till thou be destroyed with them. ⁵ But if thou think thy prophecy true, let not thy countenance sink, and let the paleness that is in thy face, depart from thee, if thou imaginest these my words cannot be accomplished. ⁶ And that thou mayst know that thou shalt experience these things together with them, behold from this hour thou shalt be associated to their people, that when they shall receive the punishment they deserve from my sword, thou mayst fall under the same vengeance. ⁷ Then Holofernes commanded his servants to take Achior, and to lead him to Bethulia, and to deliver him into the hands of the children of Israel. ⁸ And the servants of Holofernes taking him, went through the plains: but when they came near the mountains, the slingers came out against them. ⁹ Then turning out of the way by the side of the mountain, they tied Achior to a tree hand and foot, and so left him bound with ropes, and returned to their master. ¹⁰ And the children of Israel coming down from Bethulia, came to him, and loosing him they brought him to Bethulia, and setting him in the midst of the people, asked him what was the matter, that the Assyrians had left him bound. ¹¹ In those days the rulers there, were Ozias the son of Micha of the tribe of Simeon, and Charmi, called also Gothoniel. ¹² And Achior related in the midst of

the ancients, and in the presence of all the people, all that he had said being asked by Holofernes: and how the people of Holofernes would have killed him for this word, ¹³ And how Holofernes himself being angry had commanded him to be delivered for this cause to the Israelites: that when he should overcome the children of Israel, then he might command Achior also himself to be put to death by diverse torments, for having said: The God of heaven is their defender. ¹⁴ And when Achior had declared all these things, all the people fell upon their faces, adoring the Lord, and all of them together mourning and weeping poured out their prayers with one accord to the Lord, ¹⁵ Saying: O Lord God of heaven and earth, behold their pride, and look on our low condition, and have regard to the face of thy saints, and shew that thou forsakes not them that trust on thee, and that thou humblest them that presume of themselves, and glory in their own strength. ¹⁶ So when their weeping was ended, and the peoples prayer, in which they continued all the day, was concluded, they comforted Achior, ¹⁷ Saying: the God of our fathers, whose power thou hast set forth, will make this return to thee, that thou rather shalt see their destruction. ¹⁸ And when the Lord our God shall give this liberty to his servants, let God be with thee also in the midst of us: that as it shall please thee, so thou with all thine mayst converse with us. ¹⁹ Then Ozias, after the assembly was broken up, received him into his house, and made him a great supper. ²⁰ And all the ancients were invited, and they refreshed themselves together

after their fast was over. ²¹ And afterwards all the people were called together, and they prayed all the night long within the church, desiring help of the God of Israel.

7

¹ But Holofernes on the next day gave orders to his army, to go up against Bethulia. ² Now there were in his troops a hundred and twenty thousand footmen, and two and twenty thousand horsemen, besides the preparations of those men who had been taken, and who had been brought away out of the provinces and cities of all the youth. ³ All these prepared themselves together to fight against the children of Israel, and they came by the hillside to the top, which looketh toward Dothain, from the place which is called Behlma, unto Chelmon, which is over against Esdremon. ⁴ But the children of Israel, when they saw the multitude of them, prostrated themselves upon the ground, putting ashes upon their heads, praying with one accord, that the God of Israel would shew his mercy upon his people. ⁵ And taking their arms of war, they posted themselves at the places, which by a narrow pathway lead directly between the mountains, and they guarded them all day and night. ⁶ Now Holofernes, in going round about, found that the fountains which supplied them with water, ran through an aqueduct without the city on the south side: and he commanded their aqueduct to be cut off. ⁷ Nevertheless there were springs not far from the walls, out of which they were seen

secretly to draw water, to refresh themselves a little rather than to drink their fill. ⁸ But the children of Ammon and Moab came to Holofernes, saying: The children of Israel trust not in their spears, nor in their arrows, but the mountains are their defense, and the steep hires and precipices guard them. ⁹ Wherefore that thou mayst overcome them without joining battle, set guards at the springs that they may not draw water out of them, and thou shalt destroy them without sword, or at least being wearied out they will yield up their city, which they suppose, because it is situate in the mountains, to be impregnable. ¹⁰ And these words pleased Holofernes, and his officers, and he placed all round about a hundred men at every spring. ¹¹ And when they had kept this watch for full twenty days, the cisterns, and the reserve of waters failed among all the inhabitants of Bethulia, so that there was not within the city, enough to satisfy them, no not for one day, for water was daily given out to the people by measure. ¹² Then all the men and women, young men, and children, gathering themselves together to Ozias, all together with one voice, ¹³ Said: God be judge between us and thee, for thou hast done evil against us, in that thou wouldst not speak peaceably with the Assyrians, and for this cause God hath sold us into their hands. ¹⁴ And therefore there is no one to help us, while we are cast down before their eyes in thirst, and sad destruction. ¹⁵ And now assemble ye all that are in the city, that we may of our own accord yield ourselves all up to the people of Holofernes. ¹⁶ For it is better,

that being captives we should live and bless the Lord, than that we should die, and be a reproach to all flesh, after we have seen our wives and our infants die before our eyes. ¹⁷ We call to witness this day heaven and earth, and the God of our fathers, who taketh vengeance upon us according to our sins, conjuring you to deliver now the city into the hand of the army of Holofernes, that our end may be short by the edge of the sword, which is made longer by the drought of thirst. ¹⁸ And when they had said these things, there was great weeping and lamentation of all in the assembly, and for many hours with one voice they cried to God, saying: ¹⁹ We have sinned with our fathers we have done unjustly, we have committed iniquity: ²⁰ Have thou mercy on us, because thou art good, or punish our iniquities by chastising us thyself, and deliver not them that trust in thee to a people that knoweth not thee, ²¹ That they may not say among the gentiles: Where is their God? ²² And when being wearied with these cries, and tired with these weepings, they held their peace, ²³ Ozias rising up all in tears, said: Be of good courage, my brethren, and let us wait these five days for mercy from the Lord. ²⁴ For perhaps he will put a stop to his indignation, and will give glory to his own name. ²⁵ But if after five days be past there come no aid, we will do the things which you leave spoken.

8

¹ Now it came to pass, when Judith a widow had heard these words, who was the daughter

of Merari, the son of Idox, the son of Joseph, the son of Ozias, the son of Elai, the son of Jamnor, the son of Gedeon, the son of Raphaim, the son of Achitob, the son of Melehias, the son of Enan, the son of Nathanias, the son of Salathiel, the son of Simeon, the son of Ruben: ² And her husband was Manasses, who died in the time of the barley harvest: ³ For he was standing over them that bound sheaves in the field; and the heat came upon his head, and he died in Bethulia his own city, and was buried there with his fathers. ⁴ And Judith his relict was a widow now three years and six months. ⁵ And she made herself a private chamber in the upper part of her house, in which she abode shut up with her maids. ⁶ And she wore haircloth upon her loins, and fasted all the days of her life, except the sabbaths, and new moons, and the feasts of the house of Israel. ⁷ And she was exceedingly beautiful, and her husband left her great riches, and very many servants, and large possessions of herds of oxen, and flocks of sheep. ⁸ And she was greatly renowned among all, because she feared the Lord very much, neither was there any one that spoke an ill word of her. ⁹ When therefore she had heard that Ozias had promised that he would deliver up the city after the fifth day, she sent to the ancients Chabri and Charmi. ¹⁰ And they came to her, and she said to them: What is this word, by which Ozias hath consented to give up the city to the Assyrians, if within five days there come no aid to us? ¹¹ And who are you that tempt the Lord? ¹² This is not a word that may draw down mercy, but rather

that may stir up wrath, and enkindle indignation. ¹³ You have set a time for the mercy of the Lord, and you have appointed him a day, according to your pleasure. ¹⁴ But forasmuch as the Lord is patient, let us be penitent for this same thing, and with many tears let us beg his pardon: ¹⁵ For God will not threaten like man, nor be inflamed to anger like the son of man. ¹⁶ And therefore let us humble our souls before him, and continuing in an humble spirit, in his service: ¹⁷ Let us ask the Lord with tears, that according to his will so he would shew his mercy to us: that as our heart is troubled by their pride, so also we may glorify in our humility. ¹⁸ For we have not followed the sins of our fathers, who forsook their God, and worshipped strange gods. ¹⁹ For which crime they were given up to their enemies, to the sword, and to pillage, and to confusion: but we know no other God but him. ²⁰ Let us humbly wait for his consolation, and the Lord our God will require our blood of the afflictions of our enemies, and he will humble all the nations that shall rise up against us, and bring them to disgrace. ²¹ And now, brethren, as you are the ancients among the people of God, and their very soul resteth upon you: comfort their hearts by your speech, that they may be mindful how our fathers were tempted that they might be proved, whether they worshipped their God truly. ²² They must remember how our father Abraham was tempted, and being proved by many tribulations, was made the friend of God. ²³ So Isaac, so Jacob, so Moses, and all that have pleased God, passed through many tribulations,

remaining faithful. ²⁴ But they that did not receive the trials with the fear of the Lord, but uttered their impatience and the reproach of their murmuring against the Lord, ²⁵ Were destroyed by the destroyer, and perished by serpents. ²⁶ As for us therefore let us not revenge ourselves for these things which we suffer. ²⁷ But esteeming these very punishments to be less than our sins deserve, let us believe that these scourges of the Lord, with which like servants we are chastised, have happened for our amendment, and not for our destruction. ²⁸ And Ozias and the ancients said to her: All things which thou hast spoken are true, and there is nothing to be reprehended in thy words. ²⁹ Now therefore pray for us, for thou art a holy woman, and one fearing God. ³⁰ And Judith said to them: As you know that what I have been able to say is of God: ³¹ So that which I intend to do prove ye if it be of God, and pray that God may strengthen my design. ³² You shall stand at the gate this night, and I will go out with my maidservant: and pray ye, that as you have said, in five days the Lord may look down upon his people Israel. ³³ But I desire that you search not into what I am doing, and till I bring you word let nothing else be done but to pray for me to the Lord our God. ³⁴ And Ozias the prince of Juda said to her: Go in peace, and the Lord be with thee to take revenge of our enemies. So returning they departed.

9

¹ And when they were gone, Judith went into

her oratory: and putting on haircloth, laid ashes on her head: and falling down prostrate before the Lord, she cried to the Lord, saying: ² O Lord God of my father Simeon, who gavest him a sword to execute vengeance against strangers, who had defiled by their uncleanness, and uncovered the virgin unto confusion: ³ And who gavest their wives to be made a prey, and their daughters into captivity: and all their spoils to be divided to thy servants, who were zealous with thy zeal: assist, I beseech thee, O Lord God, me a widow. ⁴ For thou hast done the things of old, and hast devised one thing after another: and what thou hast designed hath been done. ⁵ For all thy ways are prepared, and in thy providence thou hast placed thy judgments. ⁶ Look upon the camp of the Assyrians now, as thou wast pleased to look upon the camp of the Egyptians, when they pursued armed after thy servants, trusting in their chariots, and in their horsemen, and in a multitude of warriors. ⁷ But thou lookedst over their camp, and darkness wearied them. ⁸ The deep held their feet, and the waters overwhelmed them. ⁹ So may it be with these also, O Lord, who trust in their multitude, and in their chariots, and in their pikes, and in their shields, and in their arrows, and glory in their spears, ¹⁰ And know not that thou art our God, who destroyest wars from the beginning, and the Lord is thy name. ¹¹ Lift up thy arm as from the beginning, and crush their power with thy power: let their power fall in their wrath, who promise themselves to violate thy sanctuary, and defile the dwelling place of

thy name, and to beat down with their sword the horn of thy altar. ¹² Bring to pass, O Lord, that his pride may be cut off with his own sword. ¹³ Let him be caught in the net of his own eyes in my regard, and do thou strike him by the graces of the words of my lips. ¹⁴ Give me constancy in my mind, that I may despise him: and fortitude that I may overthrow him. ¹⁵ For this will be a glorious monument for thy name, when he shall fall by the hand of a woman. ¹⁶ For thy power, O Lord, is not in a multitude, nor is thy pleasure in the strength of horses, nor from the beginning have the proud been acceptable to thee: but the prayer of the humble and the meek hath always pleased thee. ¹⁷ O God of the heavens, creator of the waters, and Lord of the whole creation, hear me a poor wretch, making supplication to thee, and presuming of thy mercy. ¹⁸ Remember, O Lord, thy covenant, and put thou words in my mouth, and strengthen the resolution in my heart, that thy house may continue in thy holiness: ¹⁹ And all nations may acknowledge that thou art God, and there is no other besides thee.

10

¹ And it came to pass, when she had ceased to cry to the Lord, that she rose from the place wherein she lay prostrate before the Lord. ² And she called her maid, and going down into her house she took off her haircloth, and put away the garments of her widowhood, ³ And she washed her body, and anointed herself with the best ointment, and plaited the hair of her head, and put a

bonnet upon her head, and clothed herself with the garments of her gladness, and put sandals on her feet, and took her bracelets, and lilies, and earlets, and rings, and adorned herself with all her ornaments. ⁴ And the Lord also gave her more beauty: because all this dressing up did not proceed from sensuality, lent from virtue: and therefore the Lord increased this her beauty, so that she appeared to all men's eyes incomparably lovely. ⁵ And she gave to her maid a bottle of wine to carry, and a vessel of oil, and parched corn, and dry figs, and bread and cheese, and went out. ⁶ And when they came to the gate of the city, they found Ozias, and the ancients of the city waiting. ⁷ And when they saw her they were astonished, and admired her beauty exceedingly. ⁸ But they asked her no question, only they let her pass, saying: The God of our fathers give thee grace, and may he strengthen all the counsel of thy heart with his power, that Jerusalem may glory in thee, and thy name may be in the number of the holy and just. ⁹ And they that were there said, all with one voice: So be it, so be it. ¹⁰ But Judith praying to the Lord, passed through the gates, she and her maid. ¹¹ And it came to pass, when she went down the hill, about break of day, that the watchmen of the Assyrians met her and stopped her, saying: Whence comest thou? or whither goest thou? ¹² And she answered: I am a daughter of the Hebrews, and I am fled from them, because I knew they would be made a prey to you, because they despised you, and would not of their own accord yield themselves, that they

might find mercy in your sight. ¹³ For this reason I thought with myself, saying: I will go to the presence of the prince Holofernes, that I may tell him their secrets, and shew him by what way he may take them, without the loss of one man of his army. ¹⁴ And when the men had heard her words, they beheld her face, and their eyes were amazed, for they wondered exceedingly at her beauty. ¹⁵ And they said to her: Thou hast saved thy life by taking this resolution, to come down to our lord. ¹⁶ And be assured of this, that when thou shalt stand before him, he will treat thee well, and thou wilt be most acceptable to his heart. And they brought her to the tent of Holofernes, telling him of her. ¹⁷ And when she was come into his presence, forthwith Holofernes was caught by his eyes. ¹⁸ And his officers said to him: Who can despise the people of the Hebrews who have such beautiful women, that we should not think it worth our while for their sakes to fight against them? ¹⁹ And Judith seeing Holofernes sitting under a canopy, which was woven of purple and gold, with emeralds and precious stones: ²⁰ After she had looked on his face bowed down to him, prostrating herself to the ground. And the servants of Holofernes lifted her up, by the command of their master.

11

¹ Then Holofernes said to her: Be of good comfort, and fear not in thy heart: for I have never hurt a man that was willing to serve Nabuchodonosor the king. ² And if thy people had

not despised me, I would never have lifted up my spear against them. ³ But now tell me, for what cause hast thou left them, and why it hath pleased thee to come to us? ⁴ And Judith said to him: Receive the words of thy handmaid, for if thou wilt follow the words of thy handmaid, the Lord will do with thee a perfect thing. ⁵ For as Nabuchodonosor the king of the earth liveth, and his power liveth which is in thee for chastising of all straying souls: not only men serve him through thee, but also the beasts of the field obey him. ⁶ For the industry of thy mind is spoken of among all nations, and it is told through the whole world, that thou only art excellent, and mighty in all his kingdom, and thy discipline is cried up in all provinces. ⁷ It is known also what Achior said, nor are we ignorant of what thou hast commanded to be done to him. ⁸ For it is certain that our God is so offended with sins, that he hath sent word by his prophets to the people, that he will deliver them up for their sins. ⁹ And because the children of Israel know they have offended their God, thy dread is upon them. ¹⁰ Moreover also a famine hath come upon them, and for drought of water they are already to be counted among the dead. ¹¹ And they have a design even to kill their cattle, and to drink the blood of them. ¹² And the consecrated things of the Lord their God which God forbade them to touch, in corn, wine, and oil, these have they purposed to make use of, and they design to consume the things which they ought not to touch with their hands: therefore because they do these things, it is certain they will be given

up to destruction. ¹³ And I thy handmaid knowing this, am fled from them, and the Lord hath sent me to tell thee these very things. ¹⁴ For I thy handmaid worship God even now that I am with thee, and thy handmaid will go out, and I will pray to God, ¹⁵ And he will tell me when he will repay them for their sins, and I will come and tell thee, so that I may bring thee through the midst of Jerusalem, and thou shalt have all the people of Israel, as sheep that have no shepherd, and there shall not so much as one dog bark against thee: ¹⁶ Because these things are told me by the providence of God. ¹⁷ And because God is angry with them, I am sent to tell these very things to thee. ¹⁸ And all these words pleased Holofernes, and his servants, and they admired her wisdom, and they said one to another: ¹⁹ There is not such another woman upon earth in look, in beauty, and in sense of words. ²⁰ And Holofernes said to her: God hath done well who sent thee before the people, that thou mightest give them into our hands: ²¹ And because thy promise is good, if thy God shall do this for me, he shall also be my God, and thou shalt be great in the house of Nabuchodonosor, and thy name shall be renowned through all the earth.

12

¹ Then he ordered that she should go in where his treasures were laid up, and bade her tarry there, and he appointed what should be given her from his own table. ² And Judith answered him and said: Now I cannot eat of these things which thou commandest to be given me, lest sin

come upon me: but I will eat of the things which I have brought. ³ And Holofernes said to her: If these things which thou hast brought with thee fail thee, what shall we do for thee? ⁴ And Judith said: As thy soul liveth, my lord, thy handmaid shall not spend all these things till God do by my hand that which I have purposed. And his servants brought her into the tent which he had commanded. ⁵ And when she was going in, she desired that she might have liberty to go out at night and before day to prayer, and to beseech the Lord. ⁶ And he commanded his chamberlains, that she might go out and in, to adore her God as she pleased, for three days. ⁷ And she went out in the nights into the valley of Bethulia, and washed herself in a fountain of water. ⁸ And as she came up, she prayed to the Lord the God of Israel, that he would direct her way to the deliverance of his people. ⁹ And going in, she remained pure in the tent, until she took her own meat in the evening. ¹⁰ And it came to pass on the fourth day, that Holofernes made a supper for his servants, and said to Vagao his eunuch: Go, and persuade that Hebrew woman, to consent of her own accord to dwell with me. ¹¹ For it is looked upon as shameful among the Assyrians, if a woman mock a man, by doing so as to pass free from him. ¹² Then Vagao went in to Judith, and said: Let not my good maid be afraid to go in to my lord, that she may be honoured before his face, that she may eat with him and drink wine and be merry. ¹³ And Judith answered him: Who am I, that I should gainsay my lord? ¹⁴ All that shall be good and best before

his eyes, I will do. And whatsoever shall please him, that shall be best to me all the days of my life. ¹⁵ And she arose and dressed herself out with her garments, and going in she stood before his face. ¹⁶ And the heart of Holofernes was smitten, for he was burning with the desire of her. ¹⁷ And Holofernes said to her: Drink now, and sit down and be merry for thou hast found favour before me. ¹⁸ And Judith said: I will drink my lord, because my life is magnified this day above all my days. ¹⁹ And she took and ate and drank before him what her maid had prepared for her. ²⁰ And Holofernes was made merry on her occasion, and drank exceeding much wine, so much as he had never drunk in his life.

13

¹ And when it was grown late, his servants made haste to their lodgings, and Vagao shut the chamber doors, and went his way. ² And they were all overcharged with wine. ³ And Judith was alone in the chamber. ⁴ But Holofernes lay on his bed, fast asleep, being exceedingly drunk. ⁵ And Judith spoke to her maid to stand without before the chamber, and to watch: ⁶ And Judith stood before the bed praying with tears, and the motion of her lips in silence, ⁷ Saying: Strengthen me, O Lord God of Israel, and in this hour look on the works of my hands, that as thou hast promised, thou mayst raise up Jerusalem thy city: and that I may bring to pass that which I have purposed, having a belief that it might be done by thee. ⁸ And when she had said this, she went to the pillar that was at his

bed's head, and loosed his sword that hung tied upon it. ⁹ And when she had drawn it out, she took him by the hair of his head, and said: Strengthen me, O Lord God, at this hour. ¹⁰ And she struck twice upon his neck, and out off his head, and took off his canopy from the pillars, and rolled away his headless body. ¹¹ And after a while she went out, and delivered the head of Holofernes to her maid, and bade her put it into her wallet. ¹² And they two went out according to their custom, as it were to prayer, and they passed the camp, and having compassed the valley, they came to the gate of the city. ¹³ And Judith from afar off cried to the watchmen upon the walls: Open the gates for God is with us, who hath shewn his power in Israel. ¹⁴ And it came to pass, when the men had heard her voice, that they called the ancients of the city. ¹⁵ And all ran to meet her from the least to the greatest: for they now had no hopes that she would come. ¹⁶ And lighting up lights they all gathered round about her: and she went up to a higher place, and commanded silence to be made. And when all had held their peace, ¹⁷ Judith said: Praise ye the Lord our God, who hath not forsaken them that hope in him. ¹⁸ And by me his handmaid he hath fulfilled his mercy, which he promised to the house of Israel: and he hath killed the enemy of his people by my hand this night. ¹⁹ Then she brought forth the head of Holofernes out of the wallet, and shewed it them, saying: Behold the head of Holofernes the general of the army of the Assyrians, and behold his canopy, wherein he

lay in his drunkenness, where the Lord our God slew him by the hand of a woman. ²⁰ But as the same Lord liveth, his angel hath been my keeper both going hence, and abiding there, and returning from thence hither: and the Lord hath not suffered me his handmaid to be defiled, but hath brought me back to you without pollution of sin, rejoicing for his victory, for my escape, and for your deliverance. ²¹ Give all of you glory to him, because he is good, because his mercy endureth for ever. ²² And they all adored the Lord, and said to her: The Lord hath blessed thee by his power, because by thee he hath brought our enemies to nought. ²³ And Ozias the prince of the people of Israel, said to her: Blessed art thou, O daughter, by the Lord the most high God, above all women upon the earth. ²⁴ Blessed be the Lord who made heaven and earth, who hath directed thee to the cutting off the head of the prince of our enemies. ²⁵ Because he hath so magnified thy name this day, that thy praise shall not depart out of the mouth of men who shall be mindful of the power of the Lord for ever, for that thou hast not spared thy life, by reason of the distress and tribulation of thy people, but hast prevented our ruin in the presence of our God. ²⁶ And all the people said: So be it, so be it. ²⁷ And Achior being called for came, and Judith said to him: The God of Israel, to whom thou gavest testimony, that he revengeth himself of his enemies, he hath cut off the head of all the unbelievers this night by my hand. ²⁸ And that thou mayst find that it is so, behold the head of Holofernes, who in the contempt of his pride

despised the God of Israel: and threatened thee with death, saying: When the people of Israel shall be taken, I will command thy sides to be pierced with a sword. ²⁹ Then Achior seeing the head of Holofernes, being seized with a great fear he fell on his face upon the earth, and his soul swooned away. ³⁰ But after he had recovered his spirits he fell down at her feet, and revered her and said: ³¹ Blessed art thou by thy God in every tabernacle of Jacob, for in every nation which shall hear thy name, the God of Israel shall be magnified on occasion of thee.

14

¹ And Judith said to all the people: Hear me, my brethren, hang ye up this head upon our walls. ² And as soon as the sun shall rise, let every man take his arms, and rush ye out, not as going down beneath, but as making an assault. ³ Then the watchmen must needs run to awake their prince for the battle. ⁴ And when the captains of them shall run to the tent of Holofernes, and shall find him without his head wallowing in his blood, fear shall fall upon them. ⁵ And when you shall know that they are fleeing, go after them securely, for the Lord will destroy them under your feet. ⁶ Then Achior seeing the power that the God of Israel had wrought, leaving the religion of the gentiles, he believed God, and circumcised the flesh of his foreskin, and was joined to the people of Israel, with all the succession of his kindred until this present day. ⁷ And immediately at break of day, they hung up the head of Holofernes upon

the walls, and every man took his arms, and they sent out with a great noise and shouting. ⁸ And the watchmen seeing this, ran to the tent of Holofernes. ⁹ And they that were in the tent came, and made a noise before the door of the chamber to awake him, endeavouring by art to break his rest, that Holofernes might awake, not by their calling him, but by their noise. ¹⁰ For no man durst knock, or open and go into the chamber of the general of the Assyrians. ¹¹ But when his captains and tribunes were come, and all the chiefs of the army of the king of the Assyrians, they said to the chamberlains: ¹² Go in, and awake him, for the mice coming out of their holes, have presumed to challenge us to fight. ¹³ Then Vagao going into his chamber, stood before the curtain, and made a clapping with his hands: for he thought that he was sleeping with Judith. ¹⁴ But when with hearkening, he perceived no motion of one lying, he came near to the curtain, and lifting it up, and seeing the body of Holofernes, lying upon the ground, without the head, sweltering in his blood, he cried out with a loud voice, with weeping, and rent his garments. ¹⁵ And he went into the tent of Judith, and not finding her, he ran out to the people, ¹⁶ And said: One Hebrew woman hath made confusion in the house of king Nabuchodonosor: for behold Holofernes lieth upon the ground, and his head is not upon him. ¹⁷ Now when the chiefs of the army of the Assyrians had heard this, they all rent their garments, and an intolerable fear and dread fell upon them, and their minds were troubled exceedingly. ¹⁸ And there was a very

great cry in the midst of their camp.

15

¹ And when all the army heard that Holofernes was beheaded, courage and counsel fled from them, and being seized with trembling and fear they thought only to save themselves by flight: ² So that no one spoke to his neighbor, but hanging down the head, leaving all things behind, they made haste to escape from the Hebrews, who, as they heard, were coming armed upon them, and fled by the ways of the fields, and the paths of the hills. ³ So the children of Israel seeing them fleeing, followed after them. And they went down sounding with trumpets and shouting after them. ⁴ And because the Assyrians were not united together, they went without order in their flight; but the children of Israel pursuing in one body, defeated all that they could find. ⁵ And Ozias sent messengers through all the cities and countries of Israel. ⁶ And every country, and every city, sent their chosen young men armed after them, and they pursued them with the edge of the sword until they came to the extremities of their confines. ⁷ And the rest that were in Bethulia went into the camp of the Assyrians, and took away the spoils, which the Assyrians in their flight had left behind them, and they were laden exceedingly. ⁸ But they that returned conquerors to Bethulia, brought with them all things that were theirs, so that there was no numbering of their cattle, and beasts, and all their moveables, insomuch that from the least to the greatest all were made rich by their

spoils. ⁹ And Joachim the high priest came from Jerusalem to Bethulia with all his ancients to see Judith. ¹⁰ And when she was come out to him, they all blessed her with one voice, saying: Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, thou art the joy of Israel, thou art the honour of our people: ¹¹ For thou hast done manfully, and thy heart has been strengthened, because thou hast loved chastity, and after thy husband hast not known any other: therefore also the hand of the Lord hath strengthened thee, and therefore thou shalt be blessed for ever. ¹² And all the people said: So be it, so be it. ¹³ And thirty days were scarce sufficient for the people of Israel to gather up the spoils of the Assyrians. ¹⁴ But all those things that were proved to be the peculiar goods of Holofernes, they gave to Judith in gold, and silver, and garments and precious stones, and all household stuff, and they all were delivered to her by the people. ¹⁵ And all the people rejoiced, with the women, and virgins, and young men, playing on instruments and harps.

16

¹ Then Judith sung this canticle to the Lord, saying: ² Begin ye to the Lord with timbrels, sing ye to the Lord with cymbals, tune unto him a new psalm, extol and call upon his name. ³ The Lord putteth an end to wars, the Lord is his name. ⁴ He hath set his camp in the midst of his people, to deliver us from the hand of all our enemies. ⁵ The Assyrians came out of the mountains from the north in the multitude of his strength: his multitude stopped up the torrents, and their horses

covered the valleys. ⁶ He bragged that he would set my borders on fire, and kill my young men with the sword, to make my infants a prey, and my virgins captives. ⁷ But the almighty Lord hath struck him, and hath delivered him into the hands of a woman, and hath slain him. ⁸ For their mighty one did not fall by young men, neither did the sons of Titan strike him, nor tall giants oppose themselves to him, but Judith the daughter of Merari weakened him with the beauty of her face. ⁹ For she put off her the garments of widowhood, and put on her the garments of joy, to give joy to the children of Israel. ¹⁰ She anointed her face with ointment, and bound up her locks with a crown, she took a new robe to deceive him. ¹¹ Her sandals ravished his eyes, her beauty made his soul her captive, with a sword she cut off his head. ¹² The Persians quaked at her constancy, and the Medes at her boldness. ¹³ Then the camp of the Assyrians howled, when my lowly ones appeared, parched with thirst. ¹⁴ The sons of the damsels have pierced them through, and they have killed them like children fleeing away: they perished in battle before the face of the Lord my God. ¹⁵ Let us sing a hymn to the Lord, let us sing a new hymn to our God. ¹⁶ O Adonai, Lord, great art thou, and glorious in thy power, and no one can overcome thee. ¹⁷ Let all thy creatures serve thee: because thou hast spoken, and they were made: thou didst send forth thy spirit, and they were created, and there is no one that can resist thy voice. ¹⁸ The mountains shall be moved from the foundations with the waters: the rooks shall melt

as wax before thy face. ¹⁹ But they that fear thee, shall be great with thee in all things. ²⁰ Woe be to the nation that riseth up against my people: for the Lord almighty will take revenge on them, in the day of judgment he will visit them. ²¹ For he will give fire, and worms into their flesh, that they may burn, and may feel for ever. ²² And it came to pass after these things, that all the people, after the victory, came to Jerusalem to adore the Lord: and as soon as they were purified, they all offered holocausts, and vows, and their promises. ²³ And Judith offered for an anathema of oblivion all the arms of Holofernes, which the people gave her, and the canopy that she had taken away out of his chamber. ²⁴ And the people were joyful in the sight of the sanctuary, and for three months the joy of this victory was celebrated with Judith. ²⁵ And after those days every man returned to his house, and Judith was made great in Bethulia, and she was most renowned in all the land of Israel. ²⁶ And chastity was joined to her virtue, so that she knew no man all the days of her life, after the death of Manasses her husband. ²⁷ And on festival days she came forth with great glory. ²⁸ And she abode in her husband's house a hundred and five years, and made her handmaid free, and she died, and was buried with her husband in Bethulia. ²⁹ And all the people mourned for seven days. ³⁰ And all the time of her life there was none that troubled Israel, nor many years after her death. ³¹ But the day of the festivity of this victory is received by the Hebrews in the number of holy days, and is religiously observed by the Jews from

that time until this day.

Douay-Rheims 1899
The Holy Bible in English, Douay-Rheims American
Edition of 1899, translated from the Latin Vulgate

Public Domain

Language: English

Dialect: archaic American

Translation by: English College, Douai

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2022-11-03

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