

# Book of Judith

## Chapter 7

Douay-Rheims Bible

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Holofernes besiegeth Bethulia. The distress of the besieged.

7:1. But Holofernes on the next day gave orders to his army, to go up against Bethulia.

7:2. 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.

7:3. 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 Belma, unto Chelmon, which is over against Esdrelon.

7:4. 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.

7:5. 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.

7:6. Now Holofernes, in going round about, found that the fountain 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.

7:7. 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.

7:8. 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 defence, and the steep hills and precipices guard them.

7:9. 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.

7:10. And these words pleased Holofernes, and his officers, and he placed all round about a hundred men at every spring.

7:11. 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.

7:12. Then all the men and women, young men, and children, gathering themselves together to Ozias, all together with one voice,

7:13. 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.

7:14. And therefore there is no one to help us, while we are cast down before their eyes in thirst, and sad destruction.

7:15. 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.

7:16. 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.

7:17. 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.

7:18. 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:

7:19. We have sinned with our fathers, we have done unjustly, we have committed iniquity:

7:20. 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,

7:21. That they may not say among the Gentiles: Where is their God?

7:22. And when being wearied with these cries, and tired with these weepings, they held their peace,

7:23. 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.

7:24. For perhaps he will put a stop to his indignation, and will give glory to his own name.

7:25. But if after five days be past there come no aid, we will do the things which you have spoken.