

The story so far...

Holofernes has led a successful campaign against various nations, subjugating them to the will of his lord, Nabochodnosor, and continuing the policy of Hellenistic oppression. Unlike modern-day 'ethnic cleansing' this was not a policy of destroy or drive-out, but was aimed at bending the will of the oppressed people to accepting Nabochodnosor as their overlord, and abandoning their religions in order to worship the ancient Greek gods. Needless to say, to the righteous Jews, this last part was unacceptable.

Holofernes's campaigns are entirely successful until he comes to the Jewish city of Bethulia. He sets about besieging the city, cutting off its supplies and driving the population to despair. However, one Bethulian, the beautiful widow Judith, resolves to save the city. Along with her servant she leaves the fortress and goes straight to Holofernes's camp masquerading as a traitor...

Judith

1. Ða, on þam feorðan dæge, feormode se ealdorman his
2. heahþegnas on his getelde on micelre blisse, & bebead
3. his burðegne þæt he gebringan sceolde into his
4. gebeorscipe þa foresædan ludith, & he swa dyde.
5. Þa wearð Holofernis wundorlice bliðe ealne þone
6. dæg, & fordræncte hine sylfne mid þam strangum wine
7. ofer his gewunan, & ealle his þegnas eac wæron
8. fordræncte; & hi efston on æfnunge to heora mane
9. swiðe, & þa burþegnas gebrohton þone ealdormann on
10. anum bedde mid þære ludith, & na swiðe ne gymdon
11. syððan heora hlafordes.
12. ludith geseah þa, þa þa he on slæpe wæs, þæt hire
13. wæs gerymed to hire ræde wel forð; & het hire pinene
14. healdan þa duru, & gelæhte his agen swurd & sloh to
15. his hneccan, & mid twam slegum forsloh him þone
16. swuran, & bewand þæt bodig mid ðam beddclaðum.
17. Heo nam ða þæt heafod, & his hopscytan, & eode hire ut
18. mid hire pinene swylce on gebedum, swa swa hyre
19. gewuna wæs, oppæt hi buta becomon to þam burhgeate.
20. ludith þa clypode & cwæð to þam weardmannum: ,Undoð
21. þas burhgatu! God sylf is mid us, se þe mihte gefremode
22. on Israhela þeode. & hi þa ardlice undydon þa gatu, &
23. comon endemes mid leohte hire to, forþan þe hi wendon
24. þæt heo ne com na ongear.

bebead – order
æfnunge – evening

beddclap – bedsheets
bebead – commanded
bliðe – joy
bewendan – wrap, turn
blisse – bliss
buta – both
duru – door
dyde – did
eac – each
ealdormann – the leader
efston – hurry
endemes – one and all.
feormode – feast treat
gebedun – praying
gebeorscipe – company
gebringan to bring
gebrohton – past bring
gelæhte **ge-læccan** – seize snatch
getelde – tent
gewunan – habit
gymde – took care (gyman)
heahþegnas – high servants
healdan – to hold
heora – their
hi – they
hine him
hneccan – neck
hopscytan – sheet
mane – wickedness
micelre – much
mid – with
mihte – might
ongear – again back
oððæt – until
strangum – strong
swuran – neck
swurd – sword
swylce – as if
swiþe, swyþe, adv., *very, greatly, strongly*,
syppan, adv. conj., *afterwar*
þine – female servant
þegnas – attendants
wendon (wenan) – believe
wundorlice – very
þæt hire wæs gerymed to hire ræde
wel forð – she was left to her own accord.
þe mihte gefremode on Israhela þeode =
to shew the power in Israel