

Lesson 24: Judith 12:10-14:10

Judith Beheads Holofernes, Judith and her Maid Return to Bethulia, Judith's Plan of Attack and Achior's Conversion

In our last lesson Judith and her maid left Bethulia and entered the Assyrian camp. Judith turned heads of all the Assyrians as she and her maid are led to the tent of Holofernes. Judith told Holofernes that she had left her people behind because they were about to sin against the God of Israel and this means they would be punished in battle. She told Holofernes that she will help him. She would pray each night and the LORD would let her know when the best time to attack would be. She was in the camp of Holofernes for 3 days when this lesson begins.

1. **Read Judith 12:10-20 and footnotes. Share any helpful or interesting footnotes with your group.**

Read again 12:10-14. What is significant about this being the “fourth day” in 12:10? (See also Judith 7:30)

No members of Holofernes' army were present at this dinner. How would that change the mood or atmosphere of the “party”?

Who is Bagoas?

What do you suppose is meant by Bagoas' remarks in 12:13?

Read 12:14. Do you think this *irony, sarcasm, or simply deception*?

2. **Read Judith 12:15-20. How have Holofernes' feelings changed towards Judith?**

Judith remains kosher by dining on her own food and bathing each night. Judith was able to remain holy all throughout the dinner party. What made this possible given Holofernes' intentions for the evening?

3. **Read Judith 13:1-10 and footnotes. Share any interesting footnotes.**

What did Judith tell Bagoas and her maid she was going to do that night? (See 12:3)

Before she proceeded with her grand plan to defeat Holofernes, what does Judith do? (See 12:4 and 12:7.)

**Describe how Judith brings about Holofernes' end.
What weapons did she use? (More than one.)**

What was her maid's role in this?

4. Read Judith 13:10b – 16 and footnotes.

Who does Judith give credit for her victory over Holofernes?

Reflection: Why was it important for Judith to declare that Holofernes had *not* defiled her?

5. Read Judith 13:17-20 and footnotes.

Compare Uzziah's blessing of Judith in 12:18 to Melchizedek's blessing of Abraham in Gen. 14:19 below.

Gen 14:19 ¹⁹ He blessed Abram with these words: "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, the creator of heaven and earth...."

Read Elizabeth's words to Mary in Luke 1:42. How might Elizabeth have been influenced by *The Book of Judith*?

Luke 1:42 Elizabeth cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb."

6. Read Judith 14:1-10 and footnotes.

What was Judith's plan to defeat the Assyrian army in these verses?

Why does she insist on Achior being present?

How did Achior react to Judith's testimony?

What is unusual about his circumcision? (14:10)