

Lesson 25: Judith 14:11 – 16:25

The Death of Holofernes is Discovered, The Assyrian Army Flees, Israel Rejoices, The Song of Judith

In our last lesson, Judith was invited to dine with Holofernes. His plan is to seduce her, but he drank more wine that night than he had ever drunk in his life, and he apparently passed out on his bed. Judith took his sword, grabbed his hair and with two strikes severed his head. She then took the canopy from the bed and wrapped his head in it, left the tent to pray as was her usual custom, after handing the head to her maid to carry. The two women then went to pray before leaving for the gates of Bethulia. She told her story to the towns people, showed them the head of the general, and called for Achior to identify it as that of Holofernes. He was so overwhelmed that he fainted. He then converted to the faith of Israel and was circumcised. Achior joined the house of Israel.

1. Read Judith 14: 11-19.

Who was it that discovered the headless body of Holofernes?

How does he react to the discovery in 14:16?

What was he expecting to find when he went looking for him?

What does he tell the Assyrian troops about their leader's fate? (14:18)

2. Read Judith 15:1-14 and footnotes. *Share any interesting footnotes with the group.*

How do the Assyrians react to the news of the death of Holofernes?

Who assists the Israelites from Bethulia in their attacks against the Assyrians?

Reflection: What do you suppose were the first things plundered from the abandoned Assyrian camp by the villagers from Bethulia in 15:6-7?

What gifts do they offer Judith from the Assyrian camp? (15:11)

Describe how the women of Bethulia celebrate their victory. (15:12-14)

3. Read Judith 16:1-25 and footnotes.

How are the actions of Israel's enemies described in 16:3-6 and 16:11-12?

How does the *Song of Judith* describe God in 16:13-16?

What did Judith do with the canopy and other items she was given from Holofernes' tent? (16:19)

Why did Judith and the people of Bethulia go to Jerusalem? (16:18-20)

How long did they stay in Jerusalem?

How long was Judith's life? (16:23)

Reflections on this year of Bible Study.

Reflect on what you recall from the Book of Judges.

What did we learn about Israel's relationship to the LORD at that time in history? (~1300 -1100 B.C.)

Why was it so easy for these primitive people to worship other gods?

What happened to the Chosen People when they fell into sin and forgot the LORD?

Does the study of Judges, 1 Samuel and Judith help us to understand why Israel had such a difficult time accepting Jesus Christ as Son of God in the 1st century A.D.?

What do you think is the main point of the Book of Judith?