

Lesson 1: Handout

The Book of Judith is in two parts:

Part 1: The covenant people are threatened by a powerful enemy who is intent on capturing the holy city of Jerusalem and destroying their religion and their culture (1:1-7:32). The siege of Bethulia becomes so severe that its citizens come to the point of surrendering (7:1-32).

Part 2: Through the bravery of a virtuous widow, Judith of Bethulia, God confounds His covenant people's enemy (8:1-16:25). Judith prays to God to protect her mission to save her people (8:1-9:14). She goes to the enemy camp, where, through her beauty and bravery, she gains access to General Holofernes and cuts off his head, which she brings to Bethulia (10:1-13:20). The enemy's army disintegrates (14:11-15:7). Judith goes to Jerusalem, makes a dedication to God, and then returns to Bethulia to spend the rest of her life, honored and esteemed by her fellow citizens (15:8-16:25).

Summary Outline of the Book of the Prophet Judith

Biblical Period	The Revolt of the Maccabees				
Covenant	The Sinai Covenant & the Davidic Covenant				
Focus	A powerful enemy confronts the Covenant People		God confounds His enemies through the action of Judith		
Scripture	1:1-----8:1-----16:25				
Division	The foreign invasion	The siege of Bethulia	Judith and the elders	Judith and General Holofernes	Victory over the enemy
Topic	The campaign of Holofernes against the Israelites		Judith’s plan to save Bethulia		
	The enemy besieges Bethulia		Judith’s victory over Holofernes and her people’s victory over their enemy		
Location	The Kingdom of Israel/Judah				
Time	c. 2 nd century BC				
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The Book of Judith and its heroine are not mentioned in the New Testament, but there is an allusion to Judith in the Gospel of Luke 1:42. In that verse, Elizabeth, the mother of St. John the Baptist, addresses the Virgin Mary with the greeting "Blessed are you among women." It is the same greeting Uzziah makes to Judith in Judith 13:18. Because of this expression and Judith's other qualities stressed in the text, the Church Fathers saw Judith as a type of Mary, as the Catechism 489 records: "... throughout the Old Covenant the mission of many holy women 'prepared' for that of Mary." And, in the Divine Office, some passages which extol Judith are applied to the Blessed Virgin (cf. 13:18-20, 15:9).