

Chapter 7

Holofernes besiegeth Bethulia, 6. cutteth their conduite of water, 9. kepeth their fountaines. 12. The people murmure, and mutenie, 18. yet they pray to God, 23. and the high priest determineth, if aide come not within five dayes, to deliuer the citie to the Affyrians.

But Holofernes the next day commanded his armies, that they should goe vp againft Bethulia. ² And there were of warre foote men an hundred twentie thoufand, and horfe men two and twentie thoufand, befides the preparations of thofe men, whom the captiuitie had taken, and had beene led away out of the prouinces and cities, of al youth. ³ Al prepared them felues together to the fight agaynft the children of Ifrael, and they came by the hil fide vnto the toppe, which looketh toward Dorhaim, from the place which is called Belma vnto Chelmon, which is againft Efdrelon. ⁴ But ^athe children of Ifrael, as they faw the multitude of them, laid them felues prostrate vpon the earth, cafting ashes vpon their heades, praying with one accord, that the God of Ifrael would fhew his mercie vpon his people. ⁵ And taking their weapons of warre, they fate at the places, which by a narrow path way lead directly between the mountaynes, and they were keping them al day and night. ⁶ Moreouer Holofernes, whiles he compaffeth round about, found that the foūtayne, which ranne in, went directly to their conduite on the fouth fide without the citie: and he commanded their conduite to be cut afunder. ⁷ Neuertheleffe there were fountaynes not far from the walles, out of which fecretly they femed to draw water to refrefh them felues, rather then to drinke. ⁸ But the children of Ammon, & Moab came to Holofernes, faying: The children of Ifrael truſt not in ſpeare, nor in arrow, but the mountaynes defend them, & the hilles

^a Gods ſeruantes firſt of al before they fight, do workes of penāce, cōmend their caufe to God, then take weapons in hand, & expect oppurtinitie to encounter with the enimies.

ftanding meruelous ftipe gard them. ⁹ Therefore that thou mayft ouercome them without ioyning battel, fet keepers of the fountaynes, that they may not draw water of them, and without fword thou fhalt kil them, or at the leaft being wearied they wil yeld their citie, which they thinck being fet in the mountaynes, can not be ouercome. ¹⁰ And thefe wordes pleafed Holofernes, and his fouldiars, and he placed round about an hundred men at euerie fountayne. ¹¹ And when that watch had beene fully kept for twentie dayes, the cefternes fayled, and the collections of waters to al the inhabitantes of Bethulia, fo that there was not within the citie, wherof they might be fatisfied no not for one day, becaufe water was dayly geuen to the people by meafure. ¹² Then al the men, and wemen, yong men, and children, being gathered together to ^aOzias, al together with one voice, ¹³ faid: God iudge betwen vs and thee, becaufe thou haft done euil agaynft vs, in that thou wouldeft not fpeake peaceably with the Affyrians, and for this caufe God hath fold vs into their handes. ¹⁴ And there is none to helpe, wheras we lye prostrate before their eies in thirft, & great deftruction. ¹⁵ And now affemble ye al, that are in the citie, that we may of our owne accord yeld vs al to the people of Holofernes. ¹⁶ For it is better, that captiues we bleffe our Lord liuing, then we fhould die, and be a reproch to al flefh, when we fhall fee our wiues, and our infantes die before our eies. ¹⁷ We cal to witnes this day heauen and earth, and the God of our fathers, which taketh vengeance of vs according to our finnes, that now you deliuer the citie into the hand of Holofernes armie, that our end may be fhort in the edge of the fword, which is made longer in the drought of thirft. ¹⁸ And when they had faid thefe thinges, there was made great weeping and howling of al in the affemble, and for manie houres with one voice they cried to God, faying: ¹⁹ We haue finned with our fathers, we haue done vniuftly, we haue

^a A common frailtie of people in diftreffe to impute error to their Superiour: though in deede Ozias erred rather in yelding at laft to their fuggeftion *v. 25.* then in withftanding thus long.

committed iniquitie. ²⁰ Thou becaufe thou art gracious, haue mercie vpon vs, or in thy fcourge reuenge our iniquities, and deliuer not them that truſt in thee to a people, that knoweth not thee, ²¹ that they ſay not among the Gentiles: Where is their God? ²² And when they wearied with theſe cries, and tyred with theſe weepings, had held their peace, ²³ Ozias ryſing vp embrued with teares, ſaid: Be of good chere bretheren, and theſe five daies let vs expect mercie of our Lord. ²⁴ For peradventure he wil cut of his indignation, and wil geue glorie to his name. ²⁵ But if after five daies be paſt there come no aide, we wil doe theſe wordes, which you haue ſpoken.