Luke 21:5-19
While some people were speaking about how the temple was adorned with costly stones and votive offerings, Jesus said, "All that you see here-- the days will come when there will not be left a stone upon another stone that will not be thrown down."
Then they asked him, "Teacher, when will this happen? And what sign will there be when all these things are about to happen?"
He answered, "See that you not be deceived, for many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he,' and 'The time has come.' Do not follow them! When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for such things must happen first, but it will not immediately be the end."
Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be powerful earthquakes, famines, and plagues from place to place; and awesome sights and mighty signs will come from the sky. "Before all this happens, however, they will seize and persecute you, they will hand you over to the synagogues and to prisons, and they will have you led before kings and governors because of my name. It will lead to your giving testimony."
Remember, you are not to prepare your defense beforehand, for I myself shall give you a wisdom in speaking that all your adversaries will be powerless to resist or refute. You will even be handed over by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends, and they will put some of you to death. You will be hated by all because of my name, but not a hair on your head will be destroyed. By your perseverance you will secure your lives.”

Our Scripture Reflection

What Jesus forecasted about the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple came to pass in 70 A.D. when a massive, well equipped Roman Army led by the General Titus was unleashed. But that was not the end of the world. Jesus had talked about the end of the world but gave no date as to when it would occur. In fact, He warned against the false prophets who had made predictions about it. Unlike the other Gospel writers, Luke provides us with a second volume, the Acts of the Apostles, which details how the early Christian Community was born after the death of Jesus and would grow and spread to the “ends of the earth”. All the while they lived with the belief that the glorious Lord would return at the end of time. Perseverance became their way of life.

Food for your Journey

Indicating to his disciples the mighty stones of Jerusalem's Temple, Jesus predicts: "The days will come when not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down.” These were no ordinary building stones. Although, after the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70, many of the smaller stones were later used to construct other buildings in the city, archaeologists have found some near the original site of the Temple, still located where they fell. Some of those stones weigh between 2 and 3 tons. Even larger stones form the imposing retaining wall of the Temple Mount: "At both the southwest and southeast corners of the Temple Mount, stones weighing over 80 tons are still in place at a height of at least 100 feet above the foundations. How did they get there? At our excavation site, some of the more pious local laborers who worked with these stones were so awed by their size that they attributed their placement to angels. It would have been impossible, they said, for mere man to lift them into place. In a sense, they were right; no man could have lifted these stones to such a height, notwithstanding all the sophisticated Roman engineering equipment available at the time. "In fact, the stones did not have to be lifted from below. They were actually lowered into place from above. The 16-foot-thick walls of the Temple Mount are basically retaining walls, built to retain the high pressure of the fill that was dumped between the previous platform and the new Temple Mount wall. This was Herod's way of enlarging the previous platform to twice its original size. Herod's engineers solved the construction problem by pouring the internal fill simultaneously with the construction of the walls .... [Each successive pouring of fill] created a new work-level on top of which, from the inside, a second course of stones could be laid.”


A Prayer from the Heart
Dear Jesus, As Your faithful disciple, I pray that You help me remain focused on the work of living the Gospel to which I have been assigned. Through my words and actions may I bring those who are searching for meaning in this life to Your Holy Presence. Amen