

1 Samuel 1: 4 - 20

1 Samuel 2: 1 - 10 or Psalm 113

Hebrews 10: 11 - 14, (15 - 18), 19 - 25

Mark 13: 1 - 8

### **Notes on the Gospel Lesson**

The disciples' comments in verse one clearly demonstrate the divide between Jerusalem and the Galilee. Most of the disciples were village peasants. Jerusalem, thanks to the building program of Herod the Great, was one of the most magnificent cities on earth. The disciples were as out of their element in Jerusalem as they would have been on another planet.

Yet their statement in this first verse is quite accurate. The stones used in the construction of the Temple, many of which are still in place, were huge. As a comparison, the largest stone in the construction of the Pyramids was 70 tons. The largest stone used in the construction of the Temple was 600 tons. There has never been a larger building constructed on the earth for the worship of God than the Temple built by Herod. St. Peter's in Rome would fit inside the Temple two and a half times. The disciples may have sounded as if they were country bumpkins but their description was perfect.

Jesus' description was also accurate. In A.D. 70, the Roman army, having captured the Temple from the last of the Jewish rebels, set fires all along the inside walls. The Temple was built of blocks of limestone which actually explode when heated to a high enough temperature. As the fires grew hotter along the inside walls, the stones exploded; bringing the walls crashing down.

The view of Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives is one of the most spectacular on earth. It is as if the city is laid out before one's feet. That such a glorious city could be destroyed must have seemed impossible to the disciples, as it would have seemed to anyone in the Holy City at that time. The accuracy of another part of Jesus' statement is demonstrated by history. There were at least ten, and probably more, individuals who claimed to be the Messiah during the first century. The works of all of them, save Jesus himself, ended in death and disaster.

### **Notes on the Old Testament Lesson**

Examining the names of people in the Bible is instructive. Such is the case with Elkanah, the father of Samuel. "El" is the name of the Canaanite creator god. This name was assimilated by the Hebrews as one of the two names of their deity (the other being "Yahweh") who had "created the heavens and the earth". The word "kanah" means to bestow a title, to give honor or to flatter someone. Elkanah, therefore, is someone who gives honor to God.