



Jesus said to his disciples: "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, know that its desolation is at hand. Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains. Let those within the city escape from it and let those in the countryside not enter the city, for these days are the time of punishment when all the scriptures are fulfilled. Woe to pregnant women and nursing mothers in those days, for a terrible calamity will come upon the earth and a wrathful judgment upon this people. They will fall by the edge of the sword and be taken as captives to all the Gentiles; and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. "There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on earth nations will be in dismay, perplexed by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will die of fright in anticipation of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. But when these signs begin to happen, stand erect and raise your heads because your redemption is at hand."

Introductory Prayer: Jesus my Savior, thank you for another day and another chance to grow in holiness with your grace. I love you and wish to make you the true center of my thoughts, desires and actions.

Petition: Lord, give me a healthy, but realistic Christian optimism.

1. Desolation at Hand: What a grim Gospel passage! Lots of talk of armies and calamity and roaring seas. Jesus is speaking of the coming destruction of Jerusalem (in A.D. 70) as well as images of the eEnd Ttimes In our day we can think of wars, terrorism, floods and wonder why the world is such a nasty place sometimes. Why can't life be easier? Why do so many innocent people suffer? Alas, Our Lord asked the same questions. All the evil we see springs from original sin, from the fall of Adam. It wasn't

God's plan to have all this suffering--but he allows it. He allows it because he respects our freedom. He allows it too because he knows he can bring good out of it. How do I use my freedom? Do I have enough faith in Christ to be optimistic?

2. Trampled Underfoot:. The fall of Jerusalem didn't mean that God abandoned the world. True, the focus of religion would no longer be the Temple; rather, it would be a new focus: Christ, truly present in the Eucharist. The tabernacle would be the new center of attention. How few souls grasp that truth!? After 2,000 years, Jesus is still humble, allowing himself to be kept in a tabernacle. Does that fact influence the way I act in a church? Does it affect the way I dress when going to church? Do I try to enter church with the proper state of heart and mind?

3. Redemption at Hand:. Faithful following of Christ gives us the best assurance that our lives have meaning. Christ will make sense of everything at the end of our lives. All our struggles to live the Gospel will be worth it. On the last day we might regret many things, but we will never regret the things we did for Christ. Does that truth guide our lives each day? Do we live each day as if it were our last? What is there in my life that I would be ashamed of on the last day? Why not weed it out of my life now?

Conversation with Christ: Lord, help me to judge the things of my daily life against eternity. Let me see things with your eyes. Let me see what is really valuable and what is fleeting. And help me to act accordingly.

Resolution: I will make a fresh effort to get rid of the biggest vice in my life