

Luke 21:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said,

Analysis

And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, The scene shifts from the widow's offering to architectural commentary. Disciples or bystanders marveled at the temple's magnificence—lithois kaloiς kai anathēmasin (λίθοις καλοῖς καὶ ἀναθήμασιν, 'beautiful stones and votive offerings'). Herod's temple was one of the ancient world's architectural wonders. Massive stones (some weighing hundreds of tons) formed walls; gold plates covered surfaces; elaborate decorations adorned courts. Votive offerings from wealthy donors further embellished the complex.

The observers' admiration reflects human tendency to equate size, beauty, and wealth with divine approval. The temple's grandeur suggested permanence, stability, God's blessing. Yet Jesus is about to shatter this assumption. The contrast with the preceding widow's story is deliberate: while observers admire gold and stone, Jesus values the widow's pennies. **God is unimpressed by architectural splendor built on religious exploitation.** Beauty doesn't sanctify corruption; magnificent buildings don't prove divine favor.

Historical Context

Herod the Great began rebuilding the second temple in 20 BC; work continued until AD 64, just six years before Rome destroyed it. The temple complex covered about 35 acres. The sanctuary itself featured white marble and gold plating. Josephus described massive stones in the foundation, some 67 feet long, 7.5 feet

high, and 9 feet wide. The Beautiful Gate was made of Corinthian brass. Wealthy donors contributed elaborate decorations. To observers in AD 30, this structure seemed permanent and indestructible—a monument to Jewish national identity and religious devotion. Jesus' prophecy that it would be completely destroyed must have seemed inconceivable.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. Why do humans naturally equate impressive religious buildings with God's presence and approval?
2. How does the juxtaposition of the widow's pennies with the temple's magnificence challenge values in modern church culture?
3. What does Jesus' unimpressed response to architectural splendor teach about what truly matters to God?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	τινων	λεγόντων	περὶ	τοῦ	ἱεροῦ	ὅτι	λίθοις
And	as some	spake	of	G3588	the temple	how	stones
G2532	G5100	G3004	G4012		G2411	G3754	G3037

καλοῖς	καὶ	ἀναθήμασιν	κεκόσμηται	εἴπεν
with goodly	And	gifts	it was adorned	he said
G2570	G2532	G334	G2885	G2036