

## Anna's Praise

*There was also a prophetess, Anna, a daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was well along in years, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and was a widow for 84 years. She did not leave the temple complex, serving God night and day with fastings and prayers. At that very moment, she came up and began to thank God and to speak about Him to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem. - Luke 2:36-38 HCSB*



Anna was a godly old woman who had not only gained the reputation, but also the divine approbation as a prophetess. She was not particularly unique in this vocation since there are several other women listed as prophetesses in the Scriptures.<sup>1</sup>

Anna was incredibly old for those days. As was customary for most girls, she had probably been betrothed at thirteen in a marriage arranged by her parents and had the wedding a year later. The Bible says that she was married for seven years before her husband died so that would put her at the earliest at 21 when she became a widow. Now the Greek is not particularly clear on whether she was an 84 year old widow or if she had been a widow for 84 years. Either way, she was amazingly old.

She was a widow by choice<sup>2</sup> having taken a vow to dedicate herself to the ministry rather than remarrying.<sup>3</sup> She would have been immediately recognizable as a widow since they wore special clothes.<sup>4</sup> While holding this office, the law dictated<sup>5</sup> that her relatives,<sup>6</sup> her synagogue<sup>7</sup> and anyone who wished, were to provide for her. However, she knew that it was ultimately Olam Zerowa<sup>8</sup> Himself who took care of her.<sup>9</sup>

She spent her days worshipping in Herod's Temple, in the Court of Women on the East side, looking into the Inner Court while the sacrifices were being made. The Women's Court was lined with stone rooms that would have offered her shelter as she prayed, fasted, prophesied and counseled. The redemption of Israel and the coming of the Messiah were apparently the focus of her prayers.

This great lady gives us all a tremendous example of the power of faithfully persistent prayer.<sup>10</sup> As God provided her daily needs, she trusted that He would answer this one great hope she harbored. If we delight ourselves in the Lord, He will give us the desires of our hearts.<sup>11</sup> Anna longed for God and He gave her an encounter with His Son. She put Hashem first and was honored for it.<sup>12</sup>

Anna also exemplifies the appropriate behavior of the Ransomed. She was happy about God answering her prayers,<sup>13</sup> gave thanks and then became Jerusalem's most enthusiastic missionary.<sup>14</sup>

Those who have the Lord as their Master should be characterized by zeal for prayer, praise and worship, by joy, gratitude and an irresistible urge to share what God has done for us with others.

<sup>1</sup> Miriam - Exodus 15:20; Deborah - Judges 4:4; Huldah - 2 Kings 22:14; Noadiah - Nehemiah 6:14; Isaiah's wife - Isaiah 8:3; Philip's four daughters - Acts 21:8-9

<sup>2</sup> 1 Corinthians 7:39

<sup>3</sup> 1 Timothy 5:11-12

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 38:14; Deuteronomy 24:17

<sup>5</sup> Deuteronomy 10:18; 24:19-20

<sup>6</sup> 1 Timothy 5:4

<sup>7</sup> Acts 6:1; 9:39

<sup>8</sup> Everlasting Arms - Deuteronomy 33:26

<sup>9</sup> Psalm 68:5; 146:9; Jeremiah 49:11

<sup>10</sup> Luke 18:6-7

<sup>11</sup> Psalm 37:4

<sup>12</sup> 1 Samuel 2:30 cp Matthew 26:13

<sup>13</sup> Proverbs 13:19

<sup>14</sup> Luke 2:38