

Luke 2:36

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;

Analysis

Anna, a prophetess (Ἄννα προφῆτις, Anna prophētis)—The feminine form prophētis appears only here and Revelation 2:20 in the NT, indicating a woman who spoke God's words. Her Hebrew name Hannah means 'grace,' fitting for one who announced Messiah.

The daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher—Luke's genealogical precision establishes authenticity. Asher, one of the northern tribes largely lost after Assyrian exile (722 BC), demonstrates God's preservation of remnant from all twelve tribes, contradicting the 'ten lost tribes' myth. **She was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity**—Brief marriage, likely in her teens, followed by decades-long widowhood, positions Anna as model of covenant faithfulness through life's sorrows.

Historical Context

Female prophets in Israel included Miriam (Exodus 15:20), Deborah (Judges 4:4), and Huldah (2 Kings 22:14). Anna's continuous temple presence was possible for widows with no family obligations. The Court of Women in Herod's temple provided space where devout women could pray and worship without entering restricted male courts.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does Anna's decades-long faithfulness as a widow model perseverance in serving God through difficult life circumstances?
2. What does God's inclusion of both a male prophet (Simeon) and female prophet (Anna) reveal about His valuing of women's testimony?

Interlinear Text

Καὶ ἦν Ἄννα προφῆτις θυγάτηρ Φανουήλ ἐκ
And there was one Anna a prophetess the daughter of Phanuel of
G2532 G2258 G451 G4398 G2364 G5323 G1537

φυλῆς Ἀσήρ· αὕτη προβεβηκυῖα ἐν ἡμέραις πολλαῖς
the tribe of Aser G846 G4260 G1722 age G2250 was of a great
G5443 G768 G4183

ζήσασα ἔτη μετὰ ἀνδρὸς ἐπτὰ ἀπὸ τῆς παρθενίας
and had lived years with an husband seven from G3588 virginity
G2198 G2094 G3326 G435 G2033 G575 G3932

αὕτης
G846

Additional Cross-References

Acts 21:9 (Prophecy): And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.

Exodus 15:20 (Prophecy): And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances.

Genesis 30:13 (Parallel theme): And Leah said, Happy am I, for the daughters will call me blessed: and she called his name Asher.

Revelation 7:6 (Parallel theme): Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Neptahlim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand.

Acts 2:18 (Prophecy): And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

Psalms 92:14 (Parallel theme): They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing;

Job 5:26 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season.

1 Corinthians 12:1 (Parallel theme): Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

2 Kings 22:14 (Prophecy): So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college;) and they communed with her.

Judges 4:4 (Prophecy): And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time.