

The Forgotten Jesus Podcast
S3E31
Anna's Prophecy - (Luke 2:36-40)

Description – In the previous episode we met a man named Simeon. Join us today as we meet a widow named Anna and also ask the question, why were two witnesses required to validate who Jesus was?

Luke 2:36-38

³⁶ 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, ³⁷ and was a widow for eighty-four years. She did not leave the temple, serving God night and day with fasting and prayers. ³⁸ 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.

Anna means “Grace” or “Favor.” Anna also comes from Hannah, which is also where we get Hannukah from. The festival was commemorating the supernatural event where the lampstand ran didn't run out of oil lasting in the lampstand during the Maccabean revolt.

Antiochus Epiphanes is ruling and claims to be God. He sacrifices pigs in the temple, puts up a statue of Zeus in the temple, and is forcing the Jews to eat pork.

The Maccabees have had it, and as a family they lead a small revolt that overthrows Antiochus. They cleanse the temple, but in order to have a working temple, you have to have oil for the menorah. Miraculously, the oil for the lamp, which was only enough for 1 day, lasted for 7 days.

So, back to Luke, here's this woman, Anna, who's here in the temple day and night.

The number 7 means completeness, wholeness.

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<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-forgotten-jesus-podcast/id1662689332>

So Anna lives with her husband for 7 years, but she's also a widow for 84 years. There's some debate as to whether Anna was a widow for 84 years, or if she was actually 84 years old.

But here's the question, why Anna & Simeon? Why two of them? Wouldn't just one be enough?

The name Simeon means, “Hear” or “Listen”

So you have two people here, whose very names are pointing to the fact that something important is happening.

Deuteronomy 19:15

¹⁵ “One witness cannot establish any iniquity or sin against a person, whatever that person has done. A fact must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.

So, God, right out of the gate is taking a Man and a Woman, and they are establishing the truthfulness of what’s happening.

How does Luke know all of this information? Remember, he wasn’t a disciple of Jesus. He was writing to a greek audience after the fact. He relies heavily on his account from Mary, the mother of Jesus. He’s working like an eyewitness investigative journalist.

Luke 2:39-40

³⁹ ⁴⁰ The boy grew up and became strong, filled with wisdom, and God’s grace was on him.

This bookends the section from the first part of Luke. But then you have another bookend in Luke 2:51-52.

Luke 2:51-52

⁵¹ Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them. His mother kept all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with people.

So what’s in between these two bookends that Luke gives us in the text? It’s the only account we have of the child Jesus speaking in the whole Bible.

These bookends are showing us that something very important is happening in the text. All we need to know is what’s given here.

Notice the connections between the verses in the bookends here:

The first connection - traveling to Nazareth

2:39 & 2:51 - Traveling to Nazareth from Jerusalem

The second connection - Obedience

2:39 - The obedience of Mary & Joseph to the Law

³⁹ When they had completed everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth

2:51 - The obedience of Jesus to his earthly parents

⁵¹ Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them. His mother kept all these things in her heart.

The third connection - the growth of Jesus:

2:40

⁴⁰ The boy grew up and became strong, filled with wisdom, and God's grace was on him.

2:52

⁵² And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with people.

Luke 2:52 is an amazing verse for parents or grandparents to pray for their children or grandchildren. 4 major areas to pray that they will grow in:

1. Intellectually (Wisdom)
2. Physically (Stature)
3. Spiritually (Favor with God)
4. Socially (Favor with People)