

Secrets to Hearing God's Voice From an 84-Year-Old Prophetess

Only three verses in the entire New Testament are given to a prophetess named Anna; only three verses that hold a mere four sentences. And yet the Holy Spirit determined that her role in the post-Christmas story was a starring one and deserved to be told.

Perhaps the Holy Spirit knew that you and I would not understand the entire miraculous meaning of the Christmas story without knowing that Anna was a part of God's plan.

And there was Anna a prophetess, a daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age and had lived with her husband seven years from her virginity. And she was a widow of about eighty-four years of age who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fasting and prayer night and day. Coming at that moment she gave thanks to the Lord and spoke of Him to all those who looked for the redemption of Jerusalem (Luke 2:36-38).

Anna was a prophetess! She was a woman who listened for God's voice and heard it often. Not only did she hear God's voice, but she had given God her mouth to use at her moment in history. Anna heard things others did not hear and said things others were not called upon to speak.

Anna's father was Phanuel; the name Phanuel means "vision of God". Apparently, Anna had learned to see things that others could not see from her dad. She had been trained to look for and to hear from a kingdom that cannot be seen with the natural eye nor heard with the natural ear.

Oh, how I want to be like Anna!

Did you know that “Phanuel” is also the place where Jacob wrestled with God? I wonder if Anna had done some wrestling in her life over her grief or her disappointment? You don’t reach the ripe old age of 84 without wrestling with God a time or two along life’s journey.

I have learned that it is not a sin to wrestle with God as long as you enter the fight knowing that God will always win. When Jacob wrestled with God at Phanuel, God changed Jacob’s name to Israel, which means, “Victory.”

If you are wrestling with God today, you can be sure that God is going to work a great victory in your life. When a child of God wrestles and leans into the ways of the Father, it might just produce the greatest victory that you will ever experience this side of heaven.

Phanuel and Anna were both of the tribe of Asher, which was one of the 12 tribes of Israel. The name Asher means “happy.”

Names are significant in the Bible and are not to be overlooked or disregarded. When the Holy Spirit deems it important enough to list someone’s genealogy, we need to look for the deeper meaning there.

Although Anna most likely had wrestled with God, she was also a victorious and happy woman.

Girls at this time in history were generally married between the ages of 12 and 16. Anna had been married for only seven years and had probably been a widow since she was in her early 20s. Now, at 84 years old, Anna had been a widow for over six decades of her life.

As I think about this woman, I must wonder if Anna’s life had perhaps turned out differently than she had hoped. I wonder if she had longed to hold babies of her own and instead she

watched other women for generations bring their babies to the temple.

If Anna was disappointed with life, you never would have known it by her actions. She gave every hour of every day of every year to the Lord; Anna prayed when others would have whined. Anna fasted when others would have been frustrated. Rather than hearing the sweet giggle of a baby or the pitter-pat of tiny feet, Anna was intent on hearing the voice of God. Instead of talking solely about her personal pain, she was a prophetess and declared the plan of God

Oh! How I want to be like Anna!

When Anna laid eyes on the infant Jesus, she broke out into praise and worship! Anna continued to talk about this little one who was the Hope of Israel rather than perpetually rehearse her disappointment with the life she had been given.

We need some Anna's today who will fast and pray, who will listen for the voice of God in spite of their sorrow and grief. We need a generation of Anna's who will declare, "My bones might creak, and I may not be around much longer but I will not waste one day of the life that I have been given!"

We could certainly use some Annas today who will use their mouths to talk about the plan of God regardless of their personal pain and disappointment. We need an Anna or two who will ask God to show her what others don't see and to hear what others are unable to hear.

Anna's life was not a waste, but it was an incredible example of what one woman can do by determining to stay close to God, to hear His voice and to be His mouthpiece. She wasn't defined by her pain or by the wrestling, but she will always be remembered as the woman who fasted, prayed and worshipped. Anna will also be remembered as the woman who recognized Jesus. Oh, how I want to be like Anna! {eoa}

Carol McLeod is an author and popular speaker at women's conferences and retreats, where she teaches the Word of God with great joy and enthusiasm. Carol encourages and empowers women with passionate and practical biblical messages mixed with her own special brand of hope and humor. She has written five books, including *No More Ordinary*, *Holy Estrogen!*, *The Rooms of a Woman's Heart* and *Defiant Joy!* Her most recent book, *Refined: Finding Joy in the Midst of the Fire*, was released last August. Her teaching DVD, *The Rooms of a Woman's Heart*, won the Telly Award, a prestigious industry award for excellence in religious programming. You can also listen to Carol's "Jolt of Joy" program daily on the Charisma Podcast Network. Connect with Carol or inquire about her speaking to your group at .