

PROPHESYING DAUGHTERS

Bible Background – LUKE 2:36-38; ACTS 1:12-14, 2:16-21, 21:8-9

Printed Text – LUKE 2:36-38; ACTS 2:16-21, 21:8-9

The Prophecy of Anna

³⁶ Anna, a prophet, was also there in the Temple. She was the daughter of Phanuel from the tribe of Asher, and she was very old. Her husband died when they had been married only seven years.

³⁷ Then she lived as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the Temple but stayed there day and night, worshipping God with fasting and prayer.

³⁸ She came along just as Simeon was talking with Mary and Joseph, and she began praising God. She talked about the child to everyone who had been waiting expectantly for God to rescue Jerusalem.

Acts 2

¹⁶ No, what you see was predicted long ago by the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ ‘In the last days,’ God says, ‘I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men

will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams.

¹⁸ In those days I will pour out my Spirit even on my servants—men and women alike—and they will prophesy.

¹⁹ And I will cause wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below—blood and fire and clouds of smoke.

²⁰ The sun will become dark, and the moon will turn blood red before that great and glorious day of the LORD arrives.

²¹ But everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.’

Acts 21

⁸ The next day we went on to Caesarea and stayed at the home of Philip the Evangelist, one of the seven men who had been chosen to distribute food.

⁹ He had four unmarried daughters who had the gift of prophecy.

-----New Living Translation

Lesson Introduction

Some Christian denominations debate the roles of women in the teaching and preaching of the Gospel. In this lesson, we will study what the scriptures say about women speaking out, inspired by Holy Spirit. As we examine these examples of women who are God-called to proclaim His message, let us begin to affirm contributions of godly women to the church’s mission.

Background: Joseph and Mary carried the baby Jesus into the Temple in Jerusalem to fulfill two Jewish ceremonial obligations: the redemption of the first born and the purification of the mother after childbirth (Exodus 13:3; Numbers 8:17; 18:14-16; Leviticus 12:1-8). There they met the prophets Simeon and Anna. Thirty-three years after these prophets proclaimed their

January 31, 2021 – Bible Study Guide 9

message about Christ, another prophet's words were fulfilled when both men and women played a significant part in the Day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit had been active since the beginning of time, throughout the Old Testament, and during Jesus' ministry. However, after the day of Pentecost, the role of the Holy Spirit expanded. The power of God's Spirit equips the believer to live the Christian life and carry out Christ's mission (Ephesians 1:13-14). Acts 21 states that Paul and his company stayed with Philip the evangelist and his four daughters for some time. The daughters, each called prophetess, and their father may have given Luke (the author of Luke and Acts), information about their ministry and the spreading of the Good News in Caesarea and the surrounding areas.

-----*Precepts for Living*, the UMI Annual Commentary 2020-2021, p. 259

A Woman Called to Declare the Messiah

Luke 2:36-38: Anna was a prophetess from the Israelite tribe of Asher. At the time that the Gospel of Luke introduces her, she is 84, or she has been a widow for about 84 years (v. 37 isn't quite clear). She has devoted her life since her marriage to God—praying and fasting and serving in the Temple in Jerusalem. She longed to see the Messiah's face. God granted her what she desired when Mary and Joseph walked into the Temple with the baby Jesus. She immediately recognized Him as the Messiah. Anna spoke boldly about the coming Messiah, declaring the baby Jesus as the promised savior and king.

All Believers Called to be Filled with the Holy Spirit

Acts 2:16-21: Pentecost is celebrated fifty days after Passover, and was also called the "Feast of Harvest" and the "Feast of First Fruits" (Leviticus 23:5-21). Christians celebrate Pentecost as a time of the outpouring of the gifts of the Spirit. Following the Day of Pentecost, people from all walks of life, nations, race, social status and gender can be filled with the Holy Spirit and speak God's words with power. Young and old; men and women—those who might be considered as insignificant and those who are high ranking in society. Peter spoke of this time as the partial fulfillment of Joel's prophecy concerning the church (Joel 2:28-29). God's Holy temple and the dwelling place of the Lord is now within the believer.

Joel also predicted a time of changes in the physical atmosphere that would be fulfilled in the end times (Revelation 6:12, 8:12). During the "Day of the Lord" God will come to pass judgment on those who reject Him. This is described as a frightful time and the only way to avoid this judgment is to sincerely call on the name of the Lord. Those who seek God must admit to being a sinner in need of a Savior. Through God's grace that person can call on the name of the Lord and be saved and able to escape the judgment.

◆*In what way was Joel's prophecy seen on the day of Pentecost? What aspects of his prophecy will be deferred?*

Women called to Prophecy

Acts 21:8-9: Philip was a believer and chosen to be one of the very first deacons. He was charged with taking care of the poor members of the church (Acts 6:1-6). As an evangelist, he had reached Samaria with the Gospel about twenty years before. As he matured, he developed in the faith, and subsequently had four daughters. His daughters were unmarried and all were empowered by the Holy Spirit with the gift of prophecy. The names of the young women were omitted by Luke, but it is indicated that as Philip matured in the faith, he raised his family in the fear of the Lord.

◆ *How does the mention of Anna, the women in Acts 2, and Philips daughter contribute to Jesus' ministry?*

Conclusion

These passages in this lesson proclaim the role of women in speaking out as the Spirit of the Lord inspires them. These examples of obedient saints who boldly speak according to the urging of the Spirit of God can serve as inspirations to each of us, no matter who we are—without regard to age, gender, social status, position or culture. Let us continue to seek God for the boldness to speak in favor of the Gospel.

Sources:

Banks, M. (Ed.). (2020). Call in the New Testament. *Precepts for Living*, 23(Fall Quarter), 255-264. The Urban Ministries, Inc. Annual Commentary 2020-2021.

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January 31, 2021 – Bible Study Guide 9

Lesson for Next Week – February 7, 2021 – Study Guide 10

CALLED TO EVANGELIZE

Bible Background ♦ JOHN 1:37-51, 4:25-42

Printed Text ♦ JOHN 4:25-42

Devotional Reading ♦ JOHN 1:37-51

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY

Receive the Water of Life
(Revelation 21:1-7)

TUESDAY

Jesus Declares, “I Am From Above”
(John 3:21-30)

WEDNESDAY

God’s Children Led by the Spirit
(Romans 8:12-17)

THURSDAY

Simon and Andrew First Disciples
(John 1:37-42)

FRIDAY

Galileans Philip and Nathanael become Disciples
(John 1:43-51)

SATURDAY

Jesus Heals the Son of a Galilean Official
(John 4:43-54)

SUNDAY

Samaritans come to Jesus
(John 4:25-42)