

Anna

My name is Anna and I have now seen the Anointed One. How blessed I am! I cannot recall the number of years spent praying in the Temple, but they are very many. Can you take a moment to hear the story of an old woman?

But remember that I was not always this old woman you see today. I was young once! Can you believe it? And very beautiful, so they told me anyway - at least that is what my dear husband, Levi, always said.

Ah, Levi! We were married with the hopes that all young couples have, to be blessed with children, to live long, and to honor the LORD, God of Israel. I have lived long, but not dear Levi. He died so very young, and we had no children.

I determined to seek the face of the LORD in the Temple courts. As a woman, of course, I could only go into the Court of Woman, but I came and I poured out my heart to the LORD.

I admit, to begin with, what came out was anger and sorrow. Why did He, Who holds us all in the palm of His hand, allow this to happen to me? I know from the Psalms of David, a man after God's own heart, that the LORD is not angry at us for honestly speaking to Him.

But as time went on, that heart of mine was softened and my prayers began to focus on others. I was moved to pray for those who came to the Temple Courts. And when I did, the LORD revealed the mission of my life and the purpose to my sorrow.

As I looked at those who came, whether to celebrate a feast, for purification after childbirth or the dedication of a firstborn son, I was given words of prophecy from the Almighty Himself. Because I had no other responsibilities, I heard the voice of God constantly. And I myself was cared for, in that some brought me food, and I was even given a place of shelter, provided by those who also loved the LORD.

The pains of my own soul allowed me to see suffering in the faces of others, and I was privileged to speak to them words of comfort. Because I had never borne a child, my human attraction was to babies, and yet, the LORD revealed to me that this was also part of His plan, for I was eventually to see THE BABY, the Chosen One, the Messiah.

But I also prayed for the affairs of state and the great events of the world. For, from travelers we heard many things. I prayed that rebels would not create chaos and that the Romans would not destroy us. When I heard that Herod was to be made king, I prayed that it would not be so, for his notoriety was an evil stench.

Yet God did not answer my prayer. And in that is an even more wonderful example of His greatness. For God can use the kings and rulers of this age to do His will, whether they know it or not and regardless of their merit.

Yet, when Herod announced his plans to tear down the Temple built by Zerubbabel and replace it with a bigger one, there was great consternation. Yes, he had built Caesarea and a Temple to Caesar as well as a magnificent palace and a temple in Samaria, but there was fear that he might not be able to carry it out or might even change his mind after removal of the old temple.

But Herod's iron will, often directed towards the destruction of people who stood in his way, in this case was used by God to produce a great and magnificent Temple in only one and one half years.

And in that Temple, inhabited by the Spirit of God, Who is no respecter of persons, I saw one day the Baby Who is the Hope of Israel. God came to the Temple built by an unworthy ruler, to bring salvation to an unworthy people, because of His love, which endures forever.

When I saw the baby Jesus and Joseph and Mary, I first waited until Simeon had finished blessing them, for that was proper. He also was very old and like me heard the voice of God and longed to see the Coming One. Then I spoke to them and looked at the tiny baby. It was the consolation of a mother's heart. I, who never had the privilege of a child of my own, had now seen The Child, the One for Whom the whole world waited. My life is complete, my suffering insignificant and my joy overflowing. And for the rest of my days, I will continue to pray for His kingdom.

Luke 3:36 - 38