

Aged Saints and Long Shots

Scripture Reading — Luke 2:36-38

*There was also a prophetess, Anna ... She never left the temple but worshiped night and day ...
Luke 2:36-37 —*

Luke's goal in his gospel is "an orderly account" of Jesus' life (see Luke 1:3). We notice his concern for detail as Luke lays out the facts about a prophetess named Anna. She was married for seven years "and then was a widow until she was eighty-four." When her marriage ended in tragedy, she devoted herself to another commitment: being in the temple to fast, pray, and worship.

Anna was the kind of person you might expect to be called in for a role in this divine drama. The shepherds were rough types. The wise men were pagans. But Anna was a saint, committed to God long before she met baby Jesus. She was similar to other elderly players such as Simeon, Zechariah, and Elizabeth. Sometimes we make much of the fact that God draws all kinds of unlikely characters into his plan. But God encourages us by showing that he draws Anna and other ordinary believers like her into his plan too.

Another detail we learn from Luke is that Anna was of the tribe of Asher, one of the ten northern tribes of Israel. Ever since the Assyrians had conquered and dispersed them more than 700 years earlier (see 2 kings 17), they had virtually disappeared from Scripture. But suddenly here we find one of their descendants, preserved by God as a Christmas witness. What a witness to the long reach of God's amazing grace!

Prayer

Father, thank you for the story of Anna, which shows that aged saints and long shots are also included in your amazing plan of grace. Thank you for including us too. Amen.

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Printed on September 17, 2019

