

# G P S

## For Grandparents, Parents and Seniors

By Rick Shrader

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### A Light to the Gentiles

Mary and Joseph had brought the child Jesus to the temple at Jerusalem to be presented and redeemed as the first-born, with a sacrificial offering of the poor. This first month had been full of amazing events surrounding the birth of this Savior-child. Angelic appearance and announcement had been made; shepherds had given word that they would find the babe in Bethlehem; wise men from the Orient had come with expensive gifts; Cousin Elizabeth and Zacharias had given inspired verse concerning Jesus; and awfully, king Herod had ordered the death of young male children hoping to destroy any personal rival.

Yet, knowing the danger of bringing the child to Jerusalem, Mary and Joseph desired to keep the law of God at the house of God. Here they would find two more heaven-sent visitors, the last of the inspired testimonials, two senior saints waiting for the promise of seeing the Lord's Messiah. Anna, one of only four Old Testament prophetesses, lived within the temple walls due to her "great age." She had no doubt married at fifteen or sixteen years of age, had lived with her husband only seven years, and had remained a widow for eighty-four years. She did not leave the temple area but spent her centenarian years in "fasting and prayers night and day." The Lord had graciously revealed to her that she would see the redemption of Israel before she died. And having seen Jesus, she "spoke of Him to all those who looked for the redemption in Jerusalem."

Simeon was more able to travel from without the temple area. He was also "just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel." Being guided by the Holy Spirit, he came into the temple area as Joseph was presenting Jesus to the priest according to the law. Not being a prophet himself, "it had been revealed to him

that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ." And so upon being led to the child, and interrupting the lawful ritual, he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:

*Lord, now You are letting your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all people, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel.*

The redemption for which Anna looked, and the consolation revealed to Simeon, the "glory of your people of Israel," will eventually come when this Child reigns on David's throne in this very city of Jerusalem as the angelic host had proclaimed, "on earth peace, good will toward men." But Luke's greater point, and the blessing to us at this Christmas time, is that this Child would be a light to the Gentiles. This light is said to come first and then will come the glory to Israel. Though the Jews of that day crucified their Messiah, it is the Gentiles who will respond in faith to the light of the gospel. Luke will later record Peter's words, "God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life" (Acts 11:18).

*Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!  
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all He brings,  
Ris'n with heal - ing in His wings.  
Mild He lays His glory by,  
Born that man no more may die,  
Born to raise the sons of earth,  
Born to give them second birth.  
Hark! The herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the new - born King."*

## Book Review

### *Various Statements Defining Marriage*

We will take time from our normal book reviews to give some recent statements about the definition of marriage. These are in direct contrast to the U.S. Senate's "Respect for Marriage Act," passed November 27, 2022, which undermines all respect for biblical marriage.

Elisabeth Elliot: "God might have given Adam another man to be his friend, to walk and talk and argue with if that was his pleasure. But Adam needed more than the companionship of the animals or the friendship of a man. He needed a helper, specially designed and prepared to fill that role. It was a woman God gave him, a woman, 'meet,' fit, suitable, entirely appropriate for him, made of his very bones and flesh." *Let Me Be a Woman*, 13

Andreas Köstenberger: "Equality and distinctness, complementarity and submission/authority must be held in fine balance. The man and the woman are jointly charged with ruling the earth representatively for God, yet they are not to do so androgynously or as 'unisex' creatures, but each as fulfilling their God-ordained, gender-specific roles." *God, Marriage, and Family*, p. 26

Albert Mohler: "God enshrined in the marriage union the concept of complementarianism, which upholds the equal dignity of man and woman as both created in the image of God but complementing one another through different gender roles." *The Gathering Storm*, p. 69.

John Stott: "Marriage is an exclusive heterosexual covenant between one man and one woman, ordained and sealed by God, preceded by a public leaving of parents, consummated in sexual union, issuing in a permanent mutually supportive partnership, and normally crowned by the gift of children." "Marriage and Divorce."

Christopher Ash: "Marriage is the voluntary sexual and public social union of one man and one woman from different families. This union is patterned upon the union of God with his people his bride, the Christ with his church. Intrinsic to this union is God's calling to lifelong exclusive sexual faithfulness," *Marriage*, p. 211.

Kevin DeYoung: "Marriage must be, and can only be, between a man and a woman, because marriage is not just the union of two persons but the reunion of a complementary pair." *Men and Women in the Church*, p. 30

John MacArthur: "Families are the building blocks of human society, a society that does not protect the family undermines its very existence. When the family goes, anarchy is the logical outcome." *Divine Design*, p. 65.

## Statistics

"A Growing share of Americans see the Supreme Court as friendly toward religion" says a November, 2022 Pew Research poll.

"Although growing shares across a range of religious and demographic groups say the court is friendly toward faith, groups vary in the extent to which they feel this way. About half of religiously unaffiliated (51%) and Jewish (53%) adults in the new survey say they believe the court is friendly toward religion, while a much smaller share of Christians (27%) say the same. Self-described atheists are especially likely to view the Supreme Court as friendly toward religion: 74% now say this, up sharply from 43% a few years ago. A majority of Christians (57%), meanwhile, say the Supreme Court is neutral toward religion."

## A Quotable Quote

"What marvelous grace we behold in that wondrous descent from heaven's throne to Bethlehem's manger! It had been an act of infinite condescension if the One who was the Object of angelic worship had deigned to come down to this earth and reign over it as King; but that He should appear in weakness, that He should voluntarily choose poverty, that He should become a helpless Babe—such grace is altogether beyond our ken; such matchless love passeth knowledge. O that we may never lose our sense of wonderment at the infinite condescension of God's Son." Arthur W. Pink, *Exposition of the Gospel of John*, p. 41.

## On the Lighter Side

Two young boys were spending the night at their grandparents' house the week before Christmas. At bedtime, the two boys knelt beside their beds to say their prayers. The younger one began praying at the top of his lungs, "I PRAY FOR A NEW BICYCLE...I PRAY FOR A NEW NINTENDO..." His older brother leaned over and said, "Why are you shouting? God isn't deaf," to which the little brother replied, "No, but Grandma is!"