

LUKE 2:25-35
WHOSE PLAN IS IT ANYWAY?

The sermon began with a monologue called The Director Of Music in which we heard one side of a telephone conversation between God and the director of heavenly music, who is decidedly unsure about the way in which God is sending His Son into the world. In the end, the director of music accepts, reluctantly, that God knows what he's doing!

We wouldn't do it that way! If we were saving the world, we'd do it in a different way! There would be a press conference before all of the world's TV cameras and press reporters so that BBC News and CNN would be talking about it all day and so that it would be headline news in all papers right across world! We would introduce the new Saviour celebrity to the world so that his face will be instantly recognizable by anyone He meets; the whole world will know that this is the face of salvation. To have the right street cred he will have to stay at all the best hotels wherever he goes across the world; it is the only way in which he will be taken seriously by world leaders and those who hold power, the people that he will surely be trying to influence most of all. He will be driven around in a huge motorcade, a convoy of cars and 4x4 trucks full of security men to protect him. That's how we would do it!

What do we know about Simeon? Not a lot! We only meet him here; he's only famous at all because he meets Jesus at eight days old in the temple with Mary and Joseph. We assume that he is an old man, but in fact we don't know that; we assume that because he says that he is now willing to die because he's seen the Messiah. In fact, all that we know about him is that he is "*Righteous and devout...*" (Lk 2:25); all we know is the kind of person he was, a man of faith, a man who worshipped God and who lived his life by faith; a man who had been waiting for, expecting, and looking for the coming of Messiah. He saw Jesus when he was eight days old and the Spirit inside Simeon told him that this was the Messiah, this was the One he had been waiting for. So he says, in his famous song *Nunc Dimittis* "*Sovereign Lord...*" (2:29ff) and went on to warn Mary that the child would not always have things easy as He does the will of God.

Simeon saw that God had prepared His way of salvation for the world. There was no big press conference, but salvation and the Saviour is revealed to a man of faith in the Temple. This is God's way of revealing Jesus, to humble, faithful people one at a time! Shepherds, wise men, Simeon, Anna, then later John the Baptist, Simon and Andrew, James and John and in generations since, to people like you and me as we read the stories of Jesus in the gospels and as people tell us about Him, we become convinced of what we read and hear and believe and we are persuaded that Jesus is the Saviour. There is still no fanfare of trumpets and angels; there are still no flashing lights in the sky with Jesus' name emblazoned across the sky; one by one, we come to encounter Jesus and believe.

This is God's plan: "*He humbled Himself*" (Phil 2:8) The Saviour of the world completed His task by humbling Himself and dying on a cross. That was why He came; the resurrection followed, but even that discovery was made by only a few people. This was God's plan; it's not how we would do it, but you know – it works. We are saved; the world is given hope; we are forgiven; there is light for the darkness; we can have peace with God and be reconciled to our enemies. The whole blessing of God is poured out into our world in Jesus, the baby in Bethlehem, the man on the cross. It's not how we would do it, but it's God's plan and He has done it; it is achieved and the world is blessed. All that is left for us to do is enjoy Jesus and be blessed.