

A ROYAL VISIT

1. One of the most famous Bible-songs is a celebration of the Royal Arrival. Sadly it is strongly associated with funerals and departures, and Christians often sing it in completely the wrong key – if you'll excuse the pun!

2. It is the climax and fulfilment of God's Chosen People *before* Christ, and the mission-call to God's Chosen People who now follow *after* him. I refer to Simeon's Song [Luke 2:29-32]. Unfortunately it begins with the words '*Lord, now let your servant depart in peace*' – hence its strong link with departures and death. But it is *not* about human departure from our scene but about God's arrival onto it! It is not a song of mourning but of inexpressible joy! It cries out for trumpet fanfares!

3. For centuries God's Chosen People, the Jews, had awaited the coming of the Messiah, the crowning glory of his People – Israel. In every generation there had been a faithful nucleus who awaited God's Salvation (while the majority went on their busy way and wouldn't therefore know what to look for or recognise it when it happened!).

4. When Mary brought the baby Jesus to the Temple, Simeon – an elderly Spirit-led Jew – took Jesus in his arms and recognised him as the MESSIAH! The Messiah for whom his nation had been waiting and praying! He burst into praise! (As well he might!)

5. "***Mine eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared before the face of all people!***"

6. Simeon immediately declares that God's intervention into history is not simply for the Jews, but for *all nations*! INCREDIBLE! The Jews despised Gentiles, but Jesus would be a ***light to lighten the Gentiles!*** It must have been an absolutely mind-blowing experience for Simeon.

7. Simeon had previously been promised by God that he would actually *see* the Messiah before he died!

The impossible had happened! He had seen him – and touched him! The world would never be the same again. Simeon could die in peace for he was among the first to meet and recognise arrival of the Prince of Peace.

8. In the traditional words Simeon's Song is:

***Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word.
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared before the
face of all people;
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles,
and to be the glory of thy people Israel.***

9. My own translation in more modern language is:

*Now, my Lord, you can release me from life!
You have kept your word, so I can now die in peace. With my own eyes I have
seen your Saviour*

whom you are revealing to the world!
He will be a light for all nations,
and the crowning glory of the Jews.

10. Whichever version we prefer, the message is the same. It marked the greatest Royal Visit of all time!