

Day 15: The role of a herald

Read

'Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple.' Malachi 3.1 (ESV)

Reflect

The Hebrew Scriptures (which we know as the Old Testament) were a story in need of an ending. In the Christian arrangement, Malachi ends the Old Testament with a mysterious promise that God himself intended to visit his temple... but only after a herald ran on ahead to prepare the way for him.

In the Greco-Roman world a herald would run breathless to a city waiting on tenterhooks and announce the good news: 'The Emperor is coming!' This claim of 'good news' through the arrival of a 'saviour' was highly political. In the context of Roman rule, Caesar Augustus considered himself to be the good news. An inscription discovered from 9 BC claimed that providence had sent the world Augustus 'as a saviour' and that 'the birthday of the god Augustus was the beginning of the good tidings for the world'. Today your challenge is to share good news.

Challenge 1

Give a word of encouragement or appreciation to someone you rarely encourage

Challenge 2

Share The Mystery of The New Noisy Neighbour on social media or with families you know.

Challenge 3

Take our online quiz to see how well you know the Christmas story – and encourage your friends to compete!