

Story for Year 1, Lesson 7

Jesus and His Herald

Each Manifestation of God has someone who comes before Him to prepare the way, so that the people can be ready to expect the new Messenger of God for their time.

The traditions in the Old Testament (the first books of the Bible) mention this Herald to the Messiah (another name for the Messenger of God) and compare him to the Prophet Elijah. In the story you are about to read, you will learn how Jesus as the Messiah, or Chosen One of God, had His own Herald, John the Baptist, who was compared by the people of that time to Elijah.

Elijah has always been connected with Mount Carmel. Today, the Shrine of the Báb stands on this holy Mountain of God. As you already know, the Báb was the Prophet-herald of Bahá'u'lláh and together they fulfil the prophecies and traditions of the Old Testament as well as all the other World Scriptures.

About 2,000 years ago in the Middle East there was much unrest among the people living there. The Children of Israel, now known as the Jews, were ruled over by the Romans. The Romans at that time ruled over nearly all the world, but they did not believe in God. They thought there were many gods and they called them by names like Jove, Vulcan, Minerva, Mars and Venus. The Jews were unhappy and many of them were not living their lives as Moses had taught them. They were waiting for the Messiah, another Messenger of God.

The Angel Gabriel appeared to a young woman named Mary, who was engaged to marry Joseph, and told her she would have a baby. She was to call him Jesus. The Angel Gabriel also appeared to a man called Zachariah and told him that his wife, who was Mary's cousin, would also have a baby, who should be called John.

Zachariah was told that his son would make the people ready to receive their Lord. John spent many years in the wilderness when he grew up. He became known as John the Baptist. Many people came to hear him talk and to be baptised. "I baptise you with water," he said, "but One is coming Who will baptise you with God's Holy Spirit."

When Jesus also grew up He went from Galilee one day to Jordan, where He asked John to baptise Him. Shaking his head, John said humbly, "I need to be baptised by You – why is it that You come to me to baptise You?" Jesus asked him again to baptise Him and this time John obeyed. Stepping into the River Jordan, John dipped Jesus under the water. As Jesus rose from the water, God's Holy Spirit came upon Him, like a dove lighting on Him, and a voice was heard saying, "You are my beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased." Jesus was now ready to begin His work for God.