

JESUS AND ME

ישו ואני

ONE CHILD'S FRIENDSHIP WITH THE SON OF GOD

בן האלוהים ידידות של ילד אחד עם



BY JOSHUA CARTWRIGHT



Book Excerpt

From the chapter ... “The Feeding of the Five Thousand”

Imma was trying to feed the squawking chickens in the courtyard of her house - and avoid an aggressive one that kept trying to flap up onto her grain basket.

She thought for a moment of kicking it - but remembered the Proverb her Abba had taught her: “A righteous man is kind to his animals”. She sighed, and wondered if the animals had been commanded to be kind back to people!

Imma’s mother called out: “Imma, we are leaving now.” She put the basket on a shelf, and went around to the front of the house.

The donkey was waiting, laden with provisions and a goatskin full of water. Her father lifted her onto it and took the bridle.

Imma’s mother walked alongside her, and they began the descent down the hilly roads towards Jericho.

They were heading for a village called Bethsaida in Galilee, where Imma's mother lived. It was a long journey, over ninety miles, and they would have to sleep outside in tents on the way as it would take about seven days to walk!

Imma loved watching the stars with her father. She remembered what the prophet Isaiah had said:

“He stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them out like a tent to live in.”

The next few days were long, but there was so much to see. Fields of wheat and barley, vineyards, olive groves - once she saw some naughty boys sneaking into one and stealing olives before escaping from the workers there!

Imma's family had brought some food but when they wanted a snack they would pick a few ears of wheat, and rub the kernels between their hands until the seeds came out. They tasted so good!

Imma wished they could also eat some of the juicy grapes growing on the hillsides. But the vineyards were surrounded by thorny hedges and often she saw men watching them from the tall towers built to spot thieves.

Sometimes she would walk and her mother would ride on the donkey. But she was with her family, and family was everything to a little Jewish girl.

Imma's grandmother was called Bernice, and when they got to her

house at Bethsaida, Galilee, she was inside, seated at the table.

She greeted Imma's mother, saying: "Joanna, blessed is she that comes."

Joanna gave the traditional reply: "Blessed be she that sits," and they both laughed and embraced.

Yakob came in through the door and said "Peace be to this house."

"Good day, Yakob" said Bernice.

"Why are there so many people on the road?" said Yakob. "I know it's nearly Passover but I have never seen so many at once."

"That preacher Jesus is here," said Bernice, "He's heading out to the plains of Bethsaida. People are following Him."

Imma was excited. "Can we go too, Abba?" she asked.

"Well," said Imma's father, "I did like the way He answered that teacher of the law. Perhaps He will have something else to surprise us with."

Imma jumped for joy and grabbed her father's hand. "Let's go," she declared.

"Not so fast," Yakob said. "Let's put our travel things down and have something to eat and drink."

A little later, as they walked out of the village, Imma held her father's hand tightly. Once they passed the last house belonging to

Simon the Leper, they joined a multitude of people: entire families, and men by themselves. Hundreds and then thousands of people were streaming towards one place.

To see Jesus.

The ground began to rise and in the distance, beyond the crowd on a slope she could see a figure in white, surrounded by 12 other men dressed in similar clothes.

When they got as close to Jesus as they could, they sat down. The grass was green and soft, as it usually was for a brief while during the season of Passover.

Then Jesus raised His hand and the crowd fell silent. It was an awe-inspiring thing - to feel over ten thousand people just waiting...waiting on the words of one man.

Then Jesus spoke. His voice echoed deeply around the place and it had such authority. Every word He spoke was true...and Imma felt like the Kingdom of Heaven was so near she could just turn around - and she would see it.

Jesus spoke of the beauty of God's reign, He taught about His forgiveness; He told Parables that weaved together God's Truth with events from the fields and villages they lived in. Nobody moved, even babies did not cry.

Hours went by and then Imma heard her stomach 'growwwwl'. She had been so engrossed in His Words, but now she needed something to eat!

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