

Discovery at Dawn

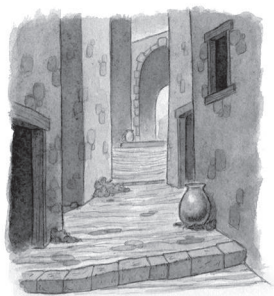


Written by
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Illustrated by
Paul Cunningham



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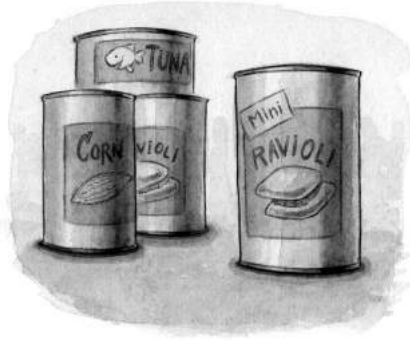


*To Jane Palladino and Doris Gillis,
in gratitude for their
constant prayers.*

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Chapter One



Trek to the City

“Not that one, Caleb!” said Noah.

“We have to give some good ones,” I said.
“You can’t give only the *yucky* vegetables to the poor.”

Mom had told me, my sister Hannah, and my brother Noah to fill a bag with canned goods for the food drive at church the next day. My little brother Noah only wanted to give the beans and beets. He didn’t want me to put any corn in the bag because he likes it. But he’s only six, so what can you expect?

“All right,” he sighed. “Give them one can.”

I took it and put it in the bag.

“Wait! Not those!” I said as Hannah put two cans of mini ravioli in the bag.

“Caleb, you just said we have to give some good stuff. We can’t just give the stuff we don’t like.”

“He meant good vegetables,” said Noah. “Not ravioli. I like that, too.”

“Mom can get more,” said Hannah. “It’s not like you’re never going to have any ever again.”

Hannah’s eleven and sometimes acts like she’s grown-up.

“But I wanted it for lunch,” said Noah. “Those are the last two cans.”

Noah and I looked at each other. I was planning on ravioli for lunch, too. Mom let us have it on Saturdays. But I thought of some little kid who would be happy when his mom came back from the food pantry with ravioli.

“Noah, let’s give them one. You can have the other one for lunch,” I said.

Noah looked at me and sighed again. “No, let’s give them both. We can get more.”

“Okay, I think this is enough. Let’s show Mom,” said Hannah.

We got up and Hannah and I each took a handle of the bag. We had only gone a few steps when it happened. We began moving in slow motion, as if the air had become thick. And then, a few seconds later, we were standing still. The bag was gone. The air was back to normal, except for the smell. It really stunk!

“Yay! Yay!” yelled Noah, jumping up and down. “It happened! It happened! We’re here!”

Noah’s T-shirt and jeans had disappeared. He was now wearing a tan-colored robe that went down to his knees. It was tied with a rope belt. It didn’t look odd, though. Hannah and I were wearing the same things, except hers had decoration around the neck. They’re called tunics.

Hannah and I looked at each other and smiled. We were back in the time of Jesus! This had already happened to us five times, but we were always amazed when it did. We couldn’t figure out how to tell when it was going to happen.



We looked around and saw that we were standing in a dirty alley. It was smelly because of the piles of garbage lying around. A few feet away from us, a dog was eating something off the ground.

“This time,” I said, “we *are* going to see Jesus! I know we are!”

“We’ve been so close,” said Hannah.

“Rrrrrrruff!” I turned to see the dog snap at Noah.

“Watch it, Noah,” Hannah said. “Don’t try to pet a dog like that. You don’t know if it’s friendly.”

“I just went to look,” said Noah. “I didn’t pet him.”

“Yuck, what’s he eating?” I said.

“I don’t know, but he doesn’t have a collar,” said Noah.

“Noah, I don’t think dog collars have been invented yet,” said Hannah.

For some reason that made us laugh and we all stood there laughing until the dog started barking at us. We stopped and it ran off down the alley.

“I don’t remember it being so stinky when we were here before,” I said.

“Well, maybe we’re not in a place we’ve been. We’ve never come back to the same place twice,” said Hannah.

In my head, I counted back over the towns we had been to: Bethlehem, Cana, Gennesaret, Capernaum, and Jericho.

“Come on! Let’s go look around!” said Noah.

As we walked down the alley to the larger street, I thought how funny it was that we acted like this was completely normal. The first time it happened, we were confused and kind of scared. But now, it was just a great adventure.

We had given up trying to make it happen, but I still thought that if we could figure out how it worked, we could come back whenever we wanted. The neat thing was, it didn’t take any time. I mean, we were always gone for two days, but each time we came back, only a few minutes had gone by in our time.

“Wow,” said Noah when we reached the street.

Wow was right. This was definitely a bigger city than any we had been in before. There were houses crowded close together in every direction. They were made of stone and most seemed to have two stories.

“Look at that!” Noah said. We looked where he was pointing and saw in the distance the high wall of a building. It was up on a hill all by itself, so we could see it from where we stood.

“Yeah, this really is a big city,” I said. “Where do you think we are, Hannah?” Hannah was the one who spent the most time looking at the maps in our Bible at home.

“I think,” Hannah said slowly, “maybe this is Jerusalem.”