

Meeting *Jesus*

written by Yvette Nelson

Nihil Obstat: Rev. William M. Becker, STD
Censor Librorum
30 November 1995

Imprimatur: †Most Rev. John G. Vlazny, DD
Bishop of Winona
30 November 1995

The nihil obstat and imprimatur are official declarations that a book or pamphlet is free of doctrinal or moral error. No implication is contained therein that those who have granted the nihil obstat or imprimatur agree with the contents, opinions, or statements expressed.

Design and composition by Proof Positive/Farrowlyne Associates, Inc.

Photo credits: Copyright © 1984 Miriam A. Kilmer, page 1 (left); copyright © Konno, Photonica, page 28; Erich Lessing, Art Resource, cover photo and page 1 (bottom middle); PhotoDisc, Inc., page 1 (middle right); Scala, Art Resource, page 1 (top and bottom right) Skjold Photographs, page 29; copyright © Masakatsu Yamazaki, Photonica, page 29 (right)

Illustration credits: Ken Call, Sid Buck and Barney Kane, pages 25, 26, and 27; Chris Higgins, Proof Positive/Farrowlyne Associates, Inc., page 24; Doug Klauba, Steve Munro Agency, pages 15, 20, and 21; Marcy Ramsey, Dilys Evans Illustration, pages 14 and 18–19; Joel Snyder, Publishers' Graphics, pages 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 22, and 23

The scriptural material described as adapted is freely paraphrased and is not to be understood or used as an official translation of the Bible.

The scriptural quotations in this book are from the New American Bible with revised Psalms and revised New Testament. Copyright © 1991, 1986, 1970 by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, 3211 Fourth Street NE, Washington, DC 20017. All rights reserved

Copyright © 1999 by Saint Mary's Press, Christian Brothers Publications, 702 Terrace Heights, Winona, MN 55987-1318, www.smp.org. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced by any means without the written permission of the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America

2132

ISBN 978-0-88489-404-9



Who Do You Say I Am?

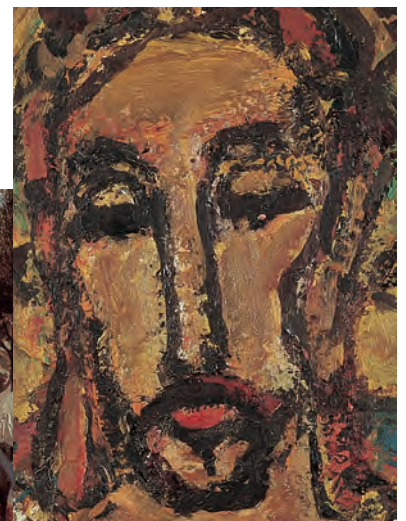
When Jesus first began his ministry, two strangers ran up to him and asked, “Where do you live?”

Jesus didn’t give them his address. Rather, he said, “Come and see.”

That is how two people first met Jesus. From that day forward, their lives changed forever. Over the next three years these two strangers became Jesus’ disciples and friends. When Jesus knew his life would soon draw to a close, he asked them, “Who do you say I am?”

In this course you, too, are invited to come and see who Jesus is. You can use this opportunity to grow in your understanding of Jesus as a young person, a man of deep feeling and compassion, a lively teacher, a person who needed and valued friends, and finally the person who offered his own life to win salvation for all of us.

This journey with Jesus begins with a close look at the world in which he spent his young life.



The Dimitri Talk Show



The following story is a fictionalized account of life in first-century Palestine.

Characters

Welcomer
Sponsor
Maximum Musculus
Dimitri the Outstanding
Martha
Priscilla
Philip
Bartholomew

Welcomer. Welcome to our weekly program featuring the young people of Palestine. This week we feature four new guests, who will talk about what it is like to be young teens today. But first a word from our sponsor.

Sponsor. Today's show is being brought to you by Barley, the Breakfast of Gladiators! Barley is grown right here in Palestine, shipped to Rome, and processed for all young people who want to have a strong body, who want to be fit and in shape! In Rome the gladiators maintain that Barley, the Breakfast of Gladiators, helps them win their fights in the arena. Here is a testimonial from Maximus Musculus, the winner of the gladiator award for staying alive for one whole month! Over to you, Max!

Maximus Musculus. Yes, Barley, the Breakfast of Gladiators, kept me alive for a whole month while I fought lions and tigers, wild boars from Africa, and competitors from all over the Roman Empire. I always eat Barley!

Welcomer. Thanks, Max! Now back to our program. Today we have with us Martha, from Jericho; Bartholomew, from Nazareth; Philip, a young man from Capernaum; and Priscilla, from Bethlehem. Please welcome these young teenagers, who have agreed to be this week's panelists. And please welcome our moderator, as always, Dimitri the Outstanding!

Dimitri the Outstanding. Welcome to the show and thank you for agreeing to speak on behalf of the many young teens in our listening audience. My first question is, What do you do each day? Let's begin with Martha, and then each of you can add to what she says.

Martha. Well, I'm thirteen, so I'm getting ready to be married in a year or two. Right now I'm learning how to weave and how to make good pita bread. I already know how to cook with herbs and spices.

Priscilla. That's what I'm doing too. But my mother is also teaching me the Scriptures of our people because, as you know, we girls don't go to school.

Philip. Hey, that's not all bad! Thank heaven that I'm almost through with school. Being stuck in that little room in the back of the synagogue since I was five hasn't always been fun, let me tell you. Right now I'm learning the pottery trade from my father.

Bartholomew. I spend part of the day at school and part of the day learning how to be a blacksmith. I like working with fire and metal and being with horses and donkeys.

Dimitri the Outstanding. Thanks for telling us so concisely what you do. Now, what do young people dream about today? Bart?

Bartholomew. I think most of us guys think about getting married and raising a family, about becoming potters or carpenters or merchants like our fathers. My dad has already started talking about my earning money in our family business so that I can get married when I'm eighteen. He is already arranging my marriage to a girl from Cana. I think my greatest dream is to be a successful husband and father and a good blacksmith.

Martha. I dream about marrying and having my first child. After all, I am nearly fourteen! A lot of the girls I know who are my age or a little older are engaged. My friend Deborah is married, and she is fourteen. I'd like to have some lovely jewelry to wear to my wedding, just like Deborah's.

Philip. Well, I dream about going to Jerusalem this year for the Passover. It'll be my first trip and I'm really excited. Next year, when I'm thirteen, I'll be of age and finished with school. Then I'll be a potter and work with my dad each day. And maybe someday I'll travel.

Priscilla. I dream about the Messiah, who my parents and grandparents talk about. They say that he will lead our people and overthrow the Romans so that we can have a free country once again.

Dimitri the Outstanding.

Thanks for sharing your dreams with us. With young people like you, Palestine has a great future. Now for another question: What are some problems young people have today?

Martha. My life has its ups and downs. Sometimes my mother doesn't seem to understand that I have opinions of my own about how things can be done in the house. And lots of times she wants me to come home before any of the other girls have to go home.

Dimitri the Outstanding.

What do you and the other girls do, Martha?

Martha. We used to play lots of games that seem silly to me now. We played hopscotch. We played with dolls. But now we mostly talk about boys and getting married and what kind of mothers we will be.

Dimitri the Outstanding. Thanks, Martha. Now let's go back to my question about problems. Does anyone else want to talk about that?

Philip. Well, sometimes I wonder if my parents were ever my age. I'd love to travel to Rome and see the imperial city. Wow! What a trip that would be! But my folks think that it's not safe to travel and that everyone ought to stay put and not move away. They keep talking about all the robbers on the roads. They seem to have lost all sense of excitement and adventure.

Dimitri the Outstanding. Thanks for that answer, Phil. I'm sure others would like to answer the question about problems, but time is flying. So we had better get along with the show. What do you young people look for in a friend?

Philip. I like a friend who thinks up fun stuff to do. My best friend is Jeshua. His dad, Joseph, is a carpenter, and while teaching Jeshua, he has also taught me a few things. I like Jeshua—we call him





Jesus—because he is always ready for any adventure. We go up on the hills and watch the eagles. Once we even counted the eggs in an eagle's nest. Another time we went with his dad to Capernaum for some wood. Sometimes we fish all day. We have wandered all over the hills and played all sorts of games. We have talked about everything under the sun. We have watched the Roman legions walk by, and even given water to them. He is a great friend because he can always think of interesting things to do.

Priscilla. I like a friend to be funny and creative. My best friend knows all the latest jokes. We try to make up new weaving patterns. We spend a lot of time with the other girls at the village well, which is always fun. Sometimes we talk seriously about the Scriptures and what they mean to us.

Bartholomew. Oh, that's another thing: Jesus and I talk about the laws, customs, and commandments of our people, too. We are both getting ready to go to Jerusalem for the Passover this year. It'll be our first trip. On the way down to Jerusalem, we will travel with our moms and the small children. On the way back, we will travel with the men. We will finally be treated like adults. What a relief!

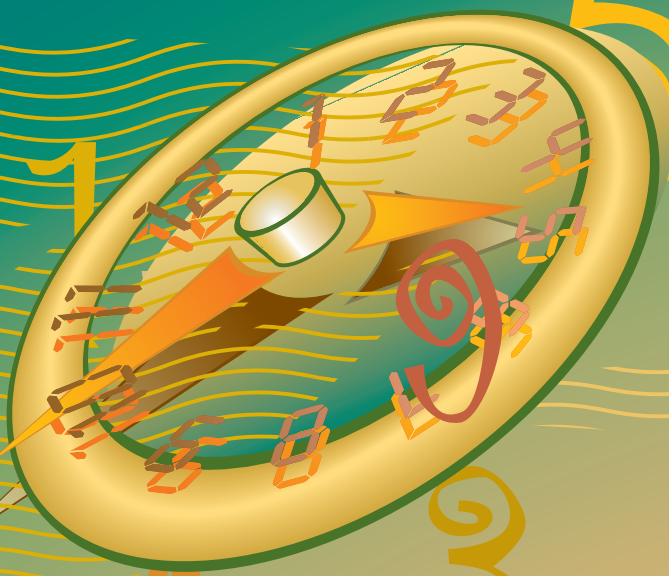
Philip. I like friends who are interested and curious about the world. I think there has to be a whole world outside of my little town. I meet my friends at the marketplace. We check out the beggars, because they're always around, and they see and hear a lot. We also meet shepherds and potters and toolmakers from all around. Yesterday we met a man from Tyre. My friends and I really like to meet people from faraway places.

Dimitri the Outstanding. Well, that's all we have time for today. Thanks, panelists, for all you shared with us today. And good-bye to all of you who listened to our show. Join us next week when we'll have four more young guests, who will talk about getting ready for the Passover in Jerusalem.

Sponsor. And remember to buy Barley, the Breakfast of Gladiators, at your local marketplace!

Welcomer.

See **YOU**
Next Week,
Folks!



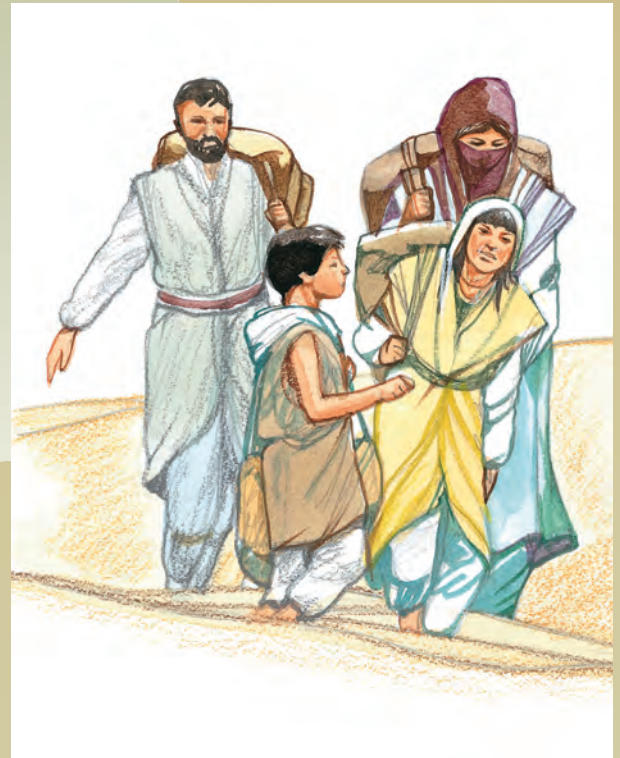
THEN and NOW

If Jesus were talking to you about his life in Nazareth, this is what he might say . . .

GETTING AROUND

I walk everywhere I want to go. A lot of bandits live in the hills and prey on travelers. So if my friends and I plan to go very far from the village, we go in groups. Of course, our parents worry about us if we are not home by sunset.

The really big thing for us is to go to Jerusalem for festivals. Almost everybody in Nazareth packs up and goes for Passover. We see camels loaded with goods from Egypt or Babylon and places I never heard of before. Around here some people ride their donkeys, but mostly they are saved for fieldwork and for carrying heavy loads. Besides, donkeys are so stubborn; they won't move unless they feel like it! Roman soldiers of high rank have horses, but most of the infantry walks. Soldiers on foot average about fifteen miles a day.



CLOTHES

Everyone I know—children and adults, men and women—wears about the same thing—two tunics and one cloak. I only wear the cloak during the cold season, when it rains and rains and rains. I use my cloak as a blanket to keep me warm at night, too.

Tunics with sleeves are expensive, so mine don't have any. Our clothing is creamy colored or light brown, because we can't afford to have the fabric dyed. That's just the way it goes. My tunic is loose-fitting, so I gather it at my waist with a leather belt. I tuck it up when I want to run or when I have to work, so it doesn't get in the way. I have one pair of sandals, period.

Oh, I forgot: The girls have one added piece of clothing—veils. Some wear earrings and bracelets or anklets, as is the custom here.



MUSIC

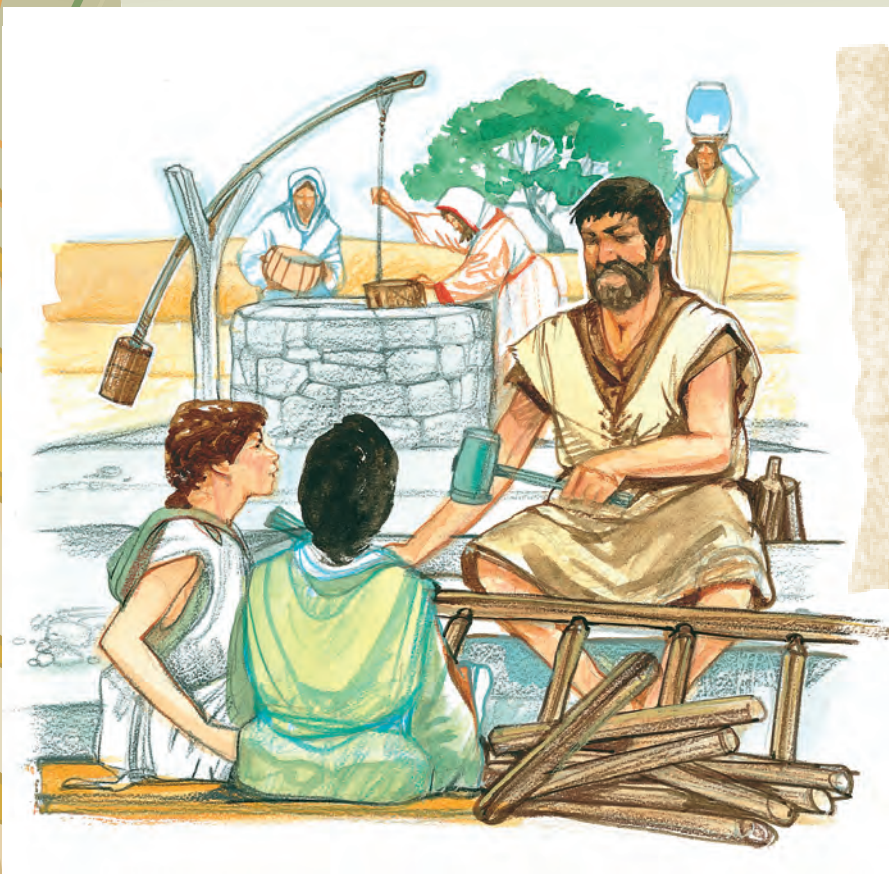
When the sun sets and brings on the evening of Sabbath, we put away our tools. This is the best time for music. We have time to hear and sing the songs of our ancestors. Someone plays a harp or a lute. Someone plays the brass cymbals. Some tap their feet, some dance, some watch. I have been hearing these songs all my life. I have tons of stuff memorized, and I can sing, hum, or whistle the songs any time I want.

WORK

The girls learn household skills at home from their mothers. They gather and cook our food. They salt and dry food for winter. They spin, weave, sew, and patch clothing. They gather in the courtyard to chat while they work. They go to the stream to wash clothes, and to the well for water. Most of the girls who are my age will be married in two or three years.

In the morning, we boys go to the synagogue to learn to read and write a little. We memorize a lot of the Scriptures. I can write my name and a few other words.

We spend the rest of our time learning our father's trade. I am learning to be a woodworker. Our one-room houses are made of clay, and we sleep on and eat off mats. So you can see there isn't much call for furniture. Wood is scarce and very expensive. We only use it for house frames and doors, and sometimes for a window frame. We use it to make useful stuff like boxes, ladders, stools, yokes and plows.



DID YOU KNOW?

The word *favor* (also sometimes translated *grace*) in the quote "Jesus advanced [in] wisdom and age and favor before God" (Luke 2:52) means "lovableness, attractiveness." Jesus grew to become a good and lovable person whom people liked to be with.

SPORTS AND RECREATION

For fun we hang around in the courtyard, especially during the long evenings when it's warm. At night we camp out on the flat roof because it's too stuffy in the house. We sit around and talk late into the night, and on clear nights, we pick out the constellations.

On summer days, we go out to the edge of town into the hills. We race, wrestle, use our slingshots, throw homemade javelins, and fish if the streams are full. They are often bone dry, though. Summer is the best time to be outside. The rainy season is cold and dreary and kind of boring, so I'm glad that is a busy time of year in the workroom. The farmers want their plows and yokes repaired and ready for spring. So we are extra busy then.



My Life, Here and Now

Choose one of the five categories of Jesus' life that you just read about. Use this space to write a note to Jesus telling him about your experience of that aspect of life here and now.