



No Dark Clouds

by R. W. Nelson

Extended Book Description

Inspired by the author's two-year observation of the struggles and disabilities of India's beggar children, No Dark Clouds is a unique Christian fiction intertwining the lives of seven beggar children in Biblical Jerusalem with historical figures of the time, including Jesus. The background of the novel is the historical account of the life and ministry of Jesus.

The novel brings forth the raw emotions of what a personal encounter with Jesus might have been like for a youth living in Biblical Israel at the time of Christ. The story also gives the reader a possible glimpse of the lives of those who found themselves caught up in the Passion Week, trial, and crucifixion: people such as a slave, a Roman soldier, a Pharisee, Barabbas and King Herod. This fictional account takes the reader to Jerusalem on Resurrection Sunday, where he or she experiences the life-changing effects of that day in the lives of Pilate, his wife Claudia, the Disciples, Cleopas, and even the High Priest Caiaphas.

Beggar Boy and his companions all bear a form of disability. For him, five scars inflicted by a cruel man are etched across his face, rendering him an outcast. He has no home and no guardians to take care of him. At ten years of age, he has to beg and steal to survive. His friends are controlled by Taskmaster whose income is derived from the children's begging. Aditya, the oldest at fourteen years of age, is also one of the shortest beggars. Her disability of metaphyseal dysplasia (similar to that of dwarfism), forces her to sing in the marketplaces in order to survive.

The beggar friends grow up in a tumultuous Israel. The Zealots (led by Barabbas) threaten rebellion while the Romans (led by Pilate) are focused on squashing any type of revolt. In the midst of all of this, Jesus continues with his ministry and carrying out miraculous healings, even in the midst of constant rejection and persecution from the Pharisees and Sadducees. In particular, one of the stories that appears is that of the centurion (Darius) who pleads with Jesus to heal his servant (Favian). Another miracle is that of the blind man who is healed by Jesus smearing mud in the blind man's eyes.

By saving the life of a centurion (Leonidas) during an ambush by Barabbas, Beggar Boy is 'rewarded' by being allowed to live and work within the Roman Fortress Antonia. This also provides a way for him to steal food from the granary and distribute it to his beggar friends. A major task for the boy is the carrying and administering of vinegar wine to criminals being crucified on a cross.

When Beggar Boy learns (then verifies) that a 'Healer-Man' has healed two of his beggar friends (one from deafness, the other from deformity in the arms and legs), he sets out by leaving Jerusalem to find this man (Jesus) in the hopes of being healed of his knife-scarred face. However, Jesus is in the Holy City for the Last Supper, Gethsemane, His trial, and crucifixion.

Beggar Boy returns to the Roman fortress only to find out that a crucifixion for three criminals will take place soon at Golgotha. Grabbing his javelin and vinegar wine, he hurriedly departs to Golgotha to administer vinegar wine to the criminals. A climactic encounter unfolds when Beggar Boy arrives at Calvary only to realize that it is the 'Healer-Man' who is being crucified. The boy had wanted Jesus to heal his scarred face, but Jesus needed the boy to give Him vinegar wine instead. The boy experiences 'spirit-crushing' disappointment and betrayal by his own Roman caretakers.

The uniqueness of No Dark Clouds is that it includes Biblical study material embedded within the storyline as experienced by the characters. It truly is an educational venture into the 'realm of the heart'. The topics include: The ministry of angels; Heaven, what is it really like; the 'names' of God in Scripture; Messianic prophecies; the miracles of Jesus; the Tabernacle of Moses; the 'I am' statements of Jesus; and the 'Beatitudes' of Jesus. Though many novels and motion pictures end at the crucifixion, No Dark Clouds follows the lives of the characters from the crucifixion, to the Resurrection, to the Ascension, and beyond. The 'empty tomb' profoundly impacts not only the beggar children, but the Jewish religious leaders, the Romans, and Jesus' disciples and followers.

A key fictional character is Mishea, a twenty-year-old Ethiopian slave who is the royal tutor for the Roman children in Jerusalem. She becomes the 'mother figure' for the beggar children, and is the first to understand Messianic Scriptures from the book of Isaiah.

'Life-trait' themes of the characters abound within the novel including: God made you unique, reputation matters, judge someone from within, true love can conquer darkness, and everyone has God-given gifts. No Dark Clouds offers readers a unique blend of Biblical history, geography, Bible references, and Christian doctrine, all wrapped around the profound story of a beggar boy and his search for and encounter with Jesus.