

## Jesus Again

The two women sat facing each other. Rich sunlight, red gold, stretched across the doorstep. The afternoon was sultry, hot and heavy, waiting for thunder.

'I wonder if its like this in Jerusalem ?' Hannah stirred in her chair, hardly expecting a reply, but Rebecca had obviously been thinking the same.

'Peter won't like that !' She had always been close to her brother. To Andrew too, but Peter was special. From childhood they had shared secrets. When Peter's Ruth had died, she was the one to whom he turned for support; she and Hannah, Ruth's mother.

'Peter will hate being penned up indoors. We couldn't keep him from the lake when he was here.'

'If we had,' Hannah reminded her, 'I think he would have broken down completely. What a blessing the Master came when he did.' Rebecca hardly needed reminding. Peter had gone over the story so many times, telling her how Jesus had forgiven him and asked him to follow him all over again. And the change in him. In many ways he was the old excited Peter again for those few days before they left for Jerusalem. But not entirely the same. The experiences of denying Jesus; of seeing him crucified and then discovering that he had really been raised from death, had so greatly affected Peter, he would never be the same again. It was like the experiences which turn a boy into a man almost overnight.

'But I don't think Peter will have lost his impetuousness.' Her thoughts broke into words. 'He'll find the waiting hard and I don't suppose he'll make it easy for the others.'

Hannah laughed. 'I can just imagine them. James arguing with John; Thomas with his endless questions; Nathaniel wanting to put it all into words, and Peter wanting to boss them all. Yet, maybe they're **all** different now.'

The two women fell silent with their own thoughts for a while until Hannah asked, 'Did the Master say how long they will have to wait?'

'No. But Peter thought because they had to wait in the city, it would be some special time - possibly Pentecost. That's the next festival time.'

'That's possible,' Hannah agreed, 'but I'm still not sure what they're waiting for.'

'The Spirit. The holy Spirit.'

'Yes, I know that,' Hannah replied, 'But what is it? What will happen?'

'I don't think any of them was really sure,' said Rebecca. 'Peter said Jesus had told them a little of what to expect, but not the details. The only thing they were sure of was that when it happened they would know it. There'd be no doubt about it.'

'So what did Jesus say?' Hannah persisted.

'Well, from what Peter said, Jesus told them lots of things. He talked about the Spirit as a person - God's spirit who would come to them - and be in them - just like he was in Jesus. He would give them strength and teach them, and make them happy just as Jesus always did. Peter said they had noticed how whenever Jesus came, since his resurrection, he seemed to know what they'd been talking about, just as though he'd been there all the time. He said that John understood that Jesus was soon going away to the Father in heaven, and then the Spirit would come, and when he did, it would really be like more of Jesus. It would be like Jesus with us all, all the time. He would be in our hearts and thoughts. That way his work will go on, but it won't be just him anymore, it will be us and everyone who believes in him - hundreds, thousands, millions all living and sharing the good news.'

While Rebecca had been speaking, the room had darkened under the gathering storm clouds. A sudden roll of thunder shook the house. Heavy drops of rain began to fall. 'It'll be glorious like the thunder,' she shouted to Hannah, 'and like millions of raindrops falling on the thirsty land. Hannah! Can you see it! More and more of Jesus! All over the world! That's what they're waiting for!'