The Dead Sea Squirrels Series

Squirreled Away
Boy Meets Squirrels
Nutty Study Buddies
Squirrelnapped!
Tree-mendous Trouble
Whirly Squirrelies
Merle of Nazareth
A Dusty Donkey Detour
Jingle Squirrels
Risky River Rescue
To Nona and Dennis, aka Mom and Dad:
I’m so grateful for your love and support over the years and am especially thankful you raised my brothers and me to love Jesus.
This is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

JOHN 3:16
Prologue

Merle and Pearl cruise down the Jordan River . . .

. . . on the vacation of a lifetime!

The squirrels end up at the Dead Sea, where . . .

You can't sink! I've always wanted to not sink!

Could you have just worn your floaties in the lake back home?

Soon the two salty squirrels are hot, thirsty, and desperate for shade. Then they spot a cave.

Merle's sense of adventure lures him into the cave, despite Pearl's protests.

If God wanted you to go into a cave, he would have made you a bat.

Who are the Dead Sea Squirrels?

Israel, AD 70
Ten-year-old Michael Gomez is spending the summer at the Dead Sea with his professor dad and his best friend, Justin.

While exploring a cave (without his dad's permission), Michael discovers two dried-out, salt-covered critters and stashes them in his backpack.

Michael sneaks the squirrels back home with him to Tennessee.
While Michael is sleeping, a thunderstorm rolls in, and it begins to rain . . . rehydrating the squirrels!

Up and kicking again after almost 2,000 years, Merle and Pearl Squirrel have great stories and advice to share with the modern world. They are the Dead Sea Squirrels!
But the Dead Sea Squirrels’ adventures don’t end there. Merle and Pearl soon find out that things are a whole lot different from the first century!

For one thing, there are self-filling fresh water bowls...

an endless supply of walnuts and chicken nuggets...

and much fancier places to live!

Thank you, chickens, for your nuggets!

Plus, they get to go to fifth grade (as long as no one sees them)!

Stay still, Merle! Pretend you are stuffed!

I could get used to this!
Now it’s back to the Holy Land to rescue the squirrels!

But even in quiet Walnut Creek, Tennessee, danger is never too far away!

What if Mom and Dad find out?!

And a man in a suit and sunglasses who wants nothing more than to get his hands on the squirrels... does!

HELP!!!

Now it’s back to the Holy Land to rescue the squirrels!

MICHAEL!
CHAPTER 1

An eighteen-pound turkey? Stuffing and cranberry sauce? The Gomez family gathering around a table on a cold, late-November afternoon with Mr. Nemesis licking mashed potatoes off of Jane’s fingers?

“Did I miss the part where the squirrels were rescued and brought back to Tennessee just in time for Thanksgiving?” you might be thinking.

“I WISH!” Merle would say (if he were here to say it).

Unfortunately, Merle and Pearl’s whereabouts were still a mystery to the Gomez family on this last Thursday of November. They had lost the squirrels’
trail outside of Jericho. After searching in and around Jerusalem for a couple of weeks with no sign of the squirrels or their squirrelnappers (Ruben and Dr. Simon), Dr. Gomez had felt they had no choice but to return home. Michael, on the other hand, would have preferred to stay.

“You haven’t touched your turkey,” Mrs. Gomez said.

“I’m not hungry.” Michael pouted as he pushed his pea salad around with a fork.

“Look, buddy,” Dr. Gomez said.

“We couldn’t stay in Israel
indefinitely without any idea of where the squirrels are.”

“It’s a small country.”

“It’s not that small. Plus, you needed to get back to school, and I needed to get back to work.”

“And I needed my little Cookies safe at home,” Mrs. Gomez added. “Cookies” was Mrs. Gomez’s pet name for Michael (which he did not like in the least).

Michael groaned. “Mom! I’m not little, and don’t call me Cookies!”

“Are you going to eat your potatoes?” Jane asked.

“Eew. Slimy cat spit fingers!” Michael protested as he pulled his plate away from her.

Jane dipped a finger into her turkey gravy and held it out for Mr. Nemesis. “It’s not slimy. It tickles,” she said.
“I have contacts who will let me know if they hear any news about the squirrels. If we get a lead, we are only a plane ride away,” Dr. Gomez said, placing a reassuring hand on Michael’s shoulder.

“But when will that be?!?” Michael wondered. “What if we never get any leads?”

“Dr. Simon can’t keep them hidden forever,” Dr. Gomez replied. “Perhaps he’s just waiting it out until he feels the coast is clear . . .”