

Most great stories start a long, long time ago, but this one is so old that no one knows when it began.

Most great stories also happen somewhere far, far away, but this one happens right where you're sitting.

It happens at the dinner table,
and at your favorite park,
at your bedside in the morning light,
and even in the dark!

It happens each and every moment,
every hour, and everywhere!
Because God, who has always been,
is always there!

That's what this story is about.

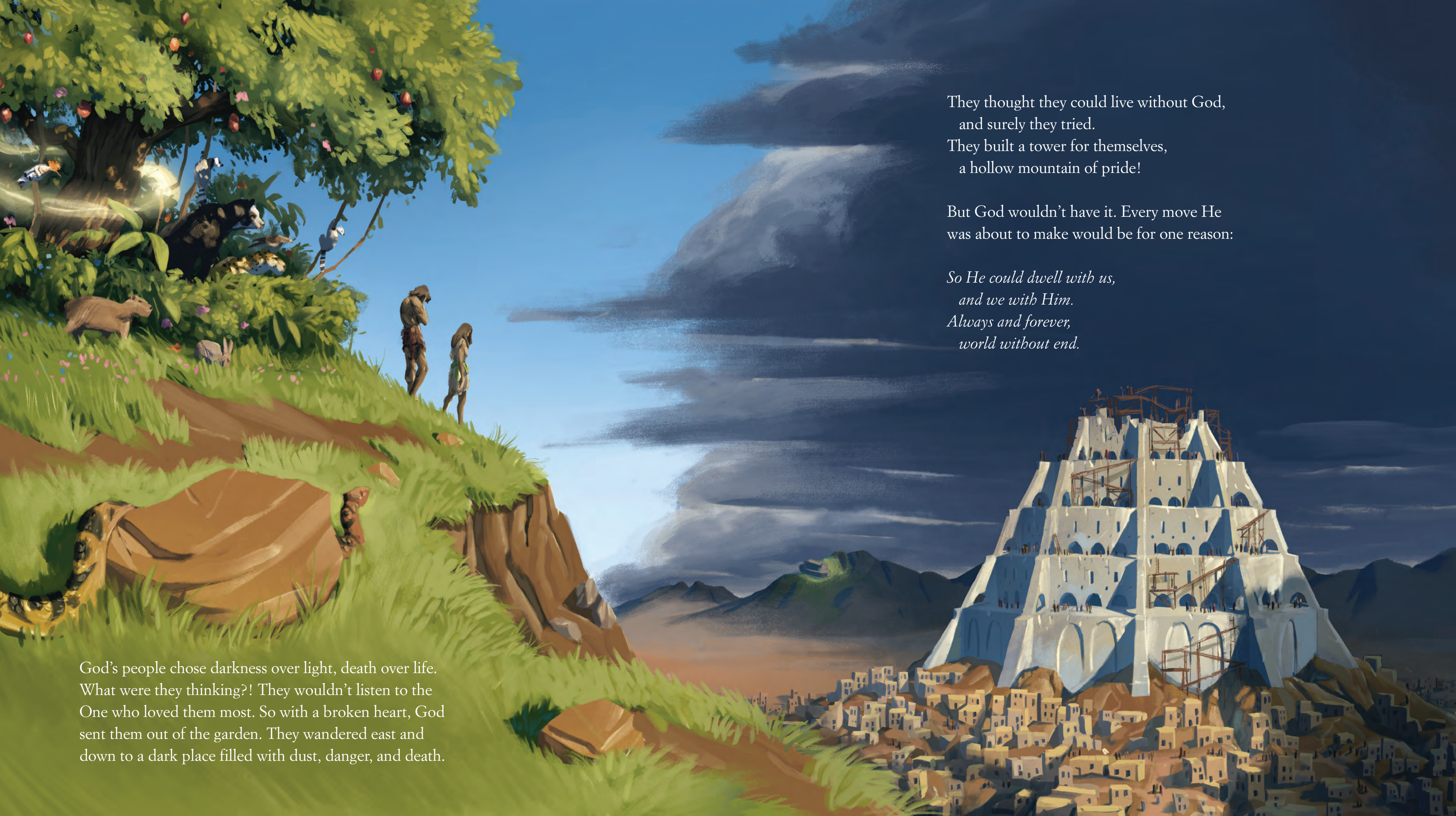
We'll jump in somewhere along the way when God made the most beautiful garden!

It was filled with life and light. As the cool wind swirled through the brush and trees, the greenest greens danced around four glistening streams. The fish, the flowers, the flocks, and the fruit were sprinkled with colors of every hue. God's good garden was made for one reason:

*So He could dwell with us,
and we with Him.
Always and forever,
world without end.*

But you'll never guess what happened next!





They thought they could live without God,
and surely they tried.
They built a tower for themselves,
a hollow mountain of pride!

But God wouldn't have it. Every move He
was about to make would be for one reason:

*So He could dwell with us,
and we with Him.
Always and forever,
world without end.*

God's people chose darkness over light, death over life. What were they thinking?! They wouldn't listen to the One who loved them most. So with a broken heart, God sent them out of the garden. They wandered east and down to a dark place filled with dust, danger, and death.



God put an end to their prideful project. He scattered all the families of the earth across the land to the North, South, East, and West.

It seemed like God was farther away than ever before, but those who knew God knew better.

All creation eagerly waited. A hush fell over God's army of angels. The stars and planets leaned in to listen.

Then it happened...

With the power of a thousand falling mountains, God's voice echoed over the face of the land, and on and on, into forever!

He spoke fresh, love-filled promises to a man called Abraham.

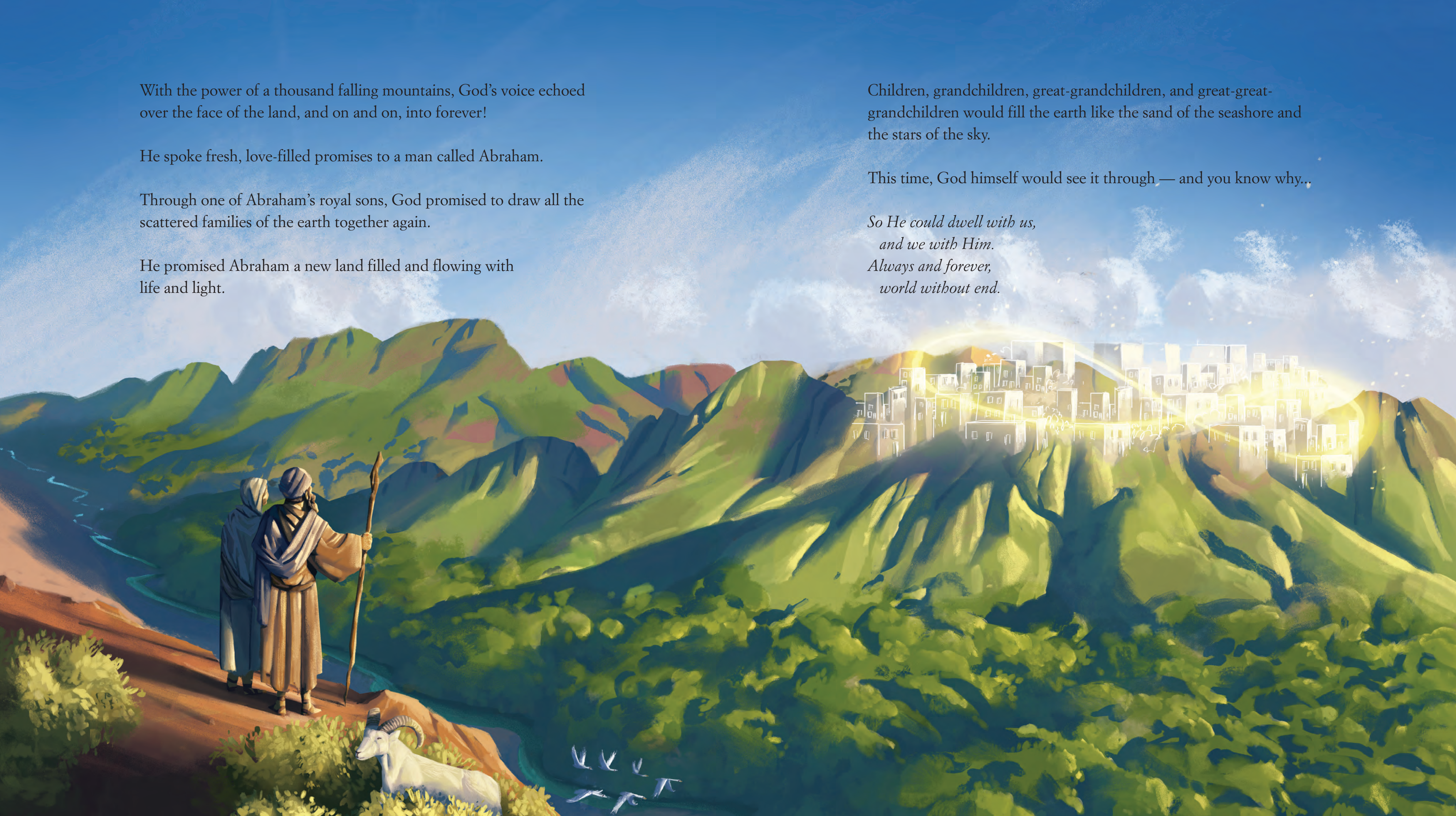
Through one of Abraham's royal sons, God promised to draw all the scattered families of the earth together again.

He promised Abraham a new land filled and flowing with life and light.

Children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren would fill the earth like the sand of the seashore and the stars of the sky.

This time, God himself would see it through — and you know why...

*So He could dwell with us,
and we with Him.
Always and forever,
world without end.*





After hundreds of years, with various twists and turns, God prepared Abraham's family to enter into that lush garden-land. They were a big, BIG family now, and He met them at His mountain in the dry dusty desert.

He had them set up a special tent filled and flowing with all the same wonderful sights and smells of His mountaintop garden!

He told them to set it up
in the middle of their camp,
where His presence would shine
like a big burning lamp!

He arranged it all, just for this reason:

*So He could dwell with us,
and we with Him.
Always and forever,
world without end.*