



A word from the authors ...

When our children are young, we secure them with seat belts and snap them into swim vests. We schedule regular checkups, show them how to floss, and make sure they get plenty of rest. We teach them right from wrong, urge caution when crossing the street. Our job? Their safety and well-being. We want our children to live healthy, full lives.

When it comes to our children's eternal lives, we guide them to the anchor of our faith: God's Word. We fill their young spirits with the stories of old: faithful Abraham, courageous Daniel, lyrical David, obedient Mary.

We do what generations of parents before us have done: pass down to our children the legacy of God's Holy Word. In this collection of great Bible stories, we continue that tradition, while adding some interpretive thoughts to help children grasp God's grand plan for their own lives. Our goal? To show that each one of us has a unique place in a much larger story. We want your children to see that Scripture is more than a collection of fascinating characters, thrilling adventures, and dramatic encounters. We want them to accept God's purpose in creating them, his desire to reunite with them, and his incomparable, amazing love for them.

Our prayer is that these stories will compel your child's fascination with Scripture, lay a foundation for a life of faith, and remind them: "The word of God is living and active ..." Hebrews 4:12 (NirV).

In the meantime, keep buckling, snapping, flossing ... and most of all keep praying for the little souls in your care.

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ZONDERKIDZ

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Chapter 2

God Builds a New Nation

*"I will make you into a great nation.
I will bless you.
I will make your name great.
You will be a blessing to others."*

Genesis 12:2

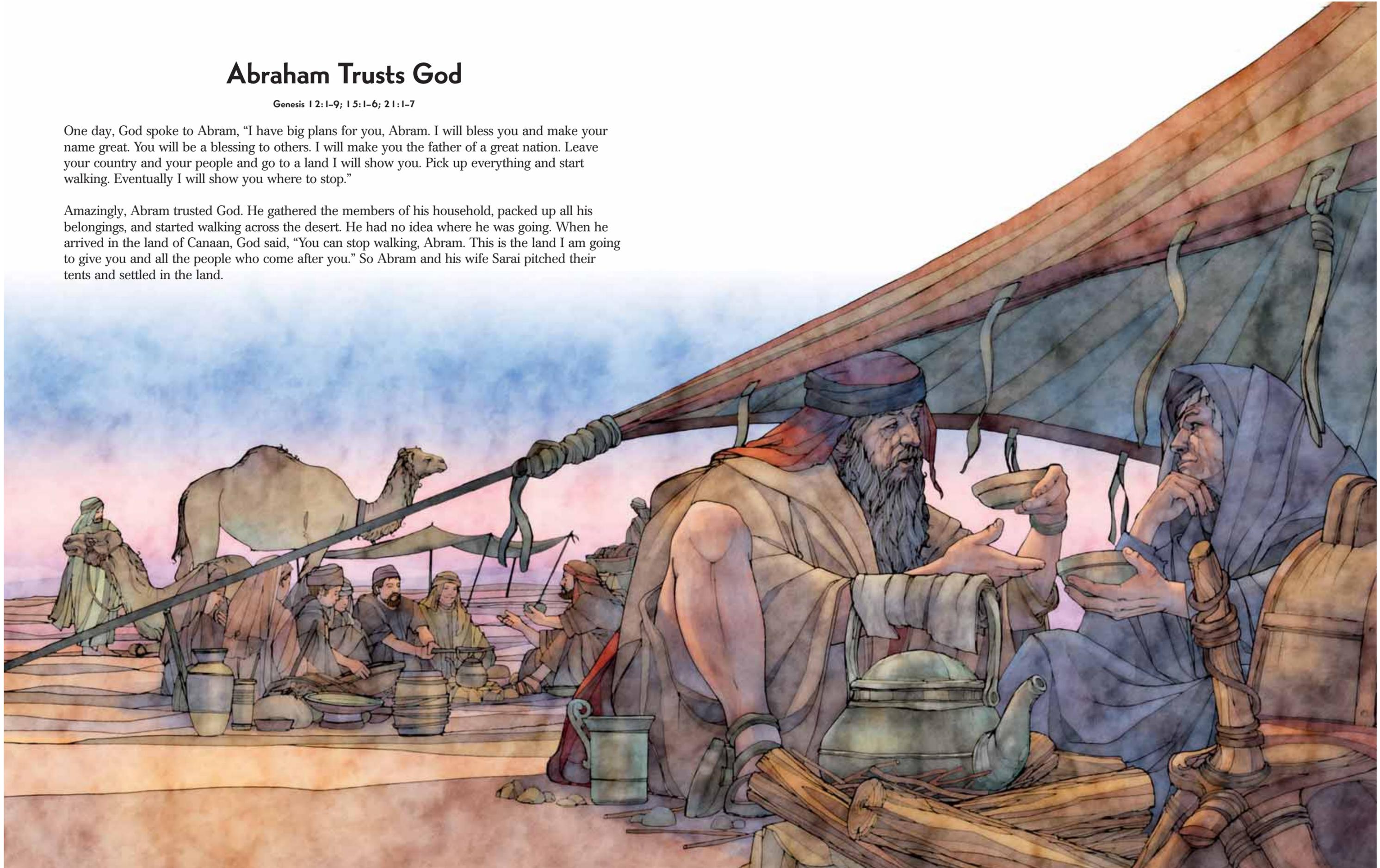
The earth recovered from the great flood. Noah's family grew and grew and grew. Once again people were scattered over the face of the whole world. God's great and grand and glorious vision was still alive. He had plans to build a new nation, and it would all start with one ordinary man.

Abraham Trusts God

Genesis 12:1-9; 15:1-6; 21:1-7

One day, God spoke to Abram, "I have big plans for you, Abram. I will bless you and make your name great. You will be a blessing to others. I will make you the father of a great nation. Leave your country and your people and go to a land I will show you. Pick up everything and start walking. Eventually I will show you where to stop."

Amazingly, Abram trusted God. He gathered the members of his household, packed up all his belongings, and started walking across the desert. He had no idea where he was going. When he arrived in the land of Canaan, God said, "You can stop walking, Abram. This is the land I am going to give you and all the people who come after you." So Abram and his wife Sarai pitched their tents and settled in the land.





Many years passed. Then one cool, dark night, God called to Abram in his tent. "Abram, come outside. Look up at the sky. Count the stars, if you can even count that high. I promise you will have as many children as there are stars in the heavens!"

Abram believed God. Even though Abram was old, even though his wife Sarai was old and had never been pregnant, Abram still believed God would make him into a great nation.

Many, many more years passed. Now Abram was 99 years old and Sarai was 90. Once again God spoke to Abram. "Abram, today I am making a covenant with you. You will be the father of many nations. Your name will now be Abraham. Give your wife the name Sarah, for she will be the mother of many nations. She soon will have a son."

Abraham fell on the ground, laughing. He said to himself, "A great nation will come from me? But how? Sarah and I are too old to have children!"

But soon Abraham and Sarah learned that nothing was too hard for God. A year later Sarah gave birth to a baby boy. Abraham named him Isaac (which means "to laugh").

When Isaac grew up, he married and had two sons: Esau and Jacob. Esau had five sons, and Jacob had twelve! Abraham's children would multiply like the stars in the heavens—just like God had promised.

God's Message

I will be your God forever and ever.

You and your relatives will be my special people.

My blessing will be with you and your children and your children's children through a thousand generations.

