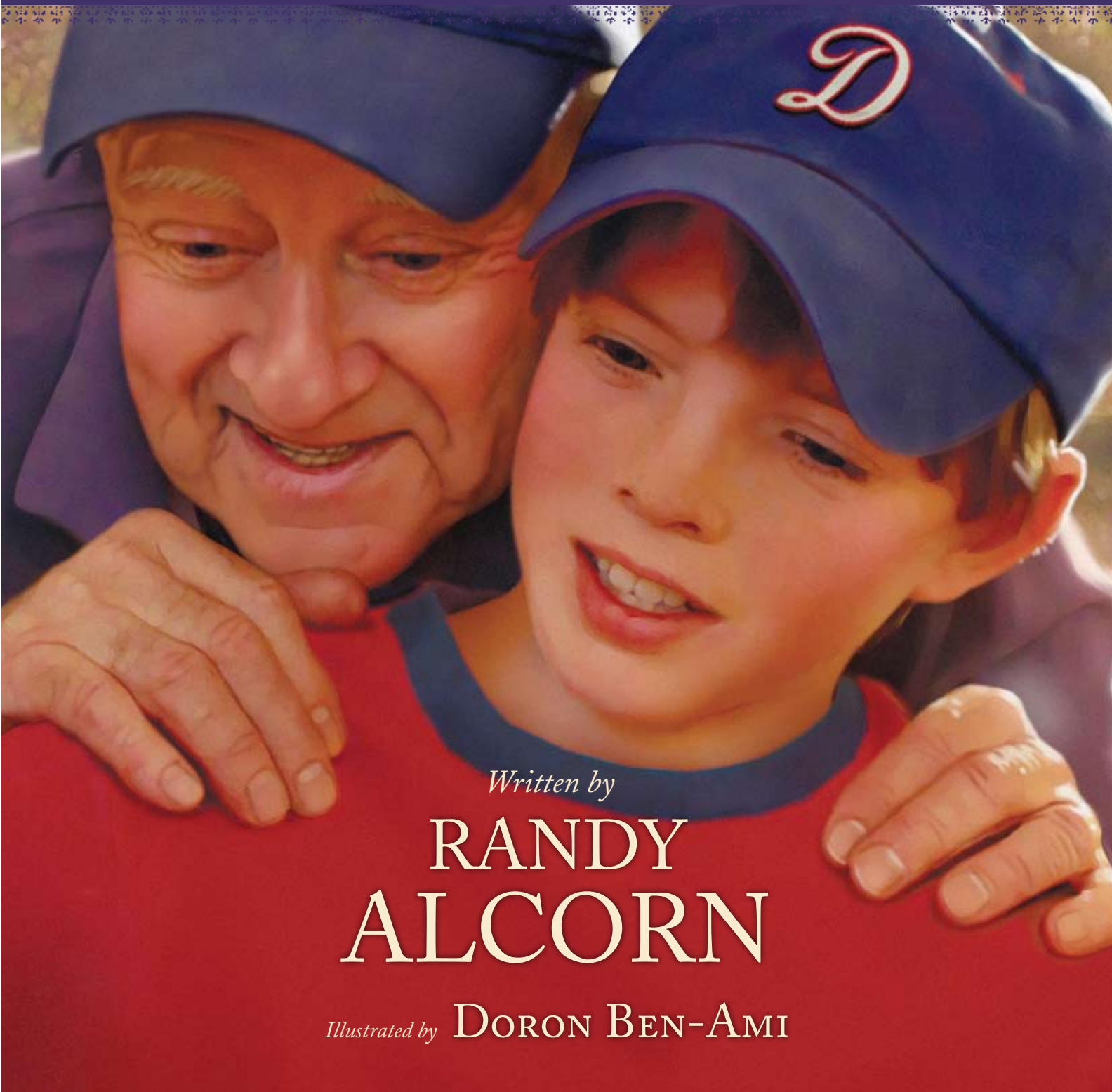


WAIT UNTIL THEN



Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois



Written by

**RANDY
ALCORN**

Illustrated by **DORON BEN-AMI**



To our grandchildren,
Jacob Gary Stump,
Matthew James Franklin,
and Tyler Daniel Stump
—R. A.

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart;
do not depend on your own understanding.
Seek his will in all you do,
and he will show you which path to take.*

PROVERBS 3:5-6, NLT

To Grandpa Jerry,
who always hit a home run
into our hearts
—D. B.

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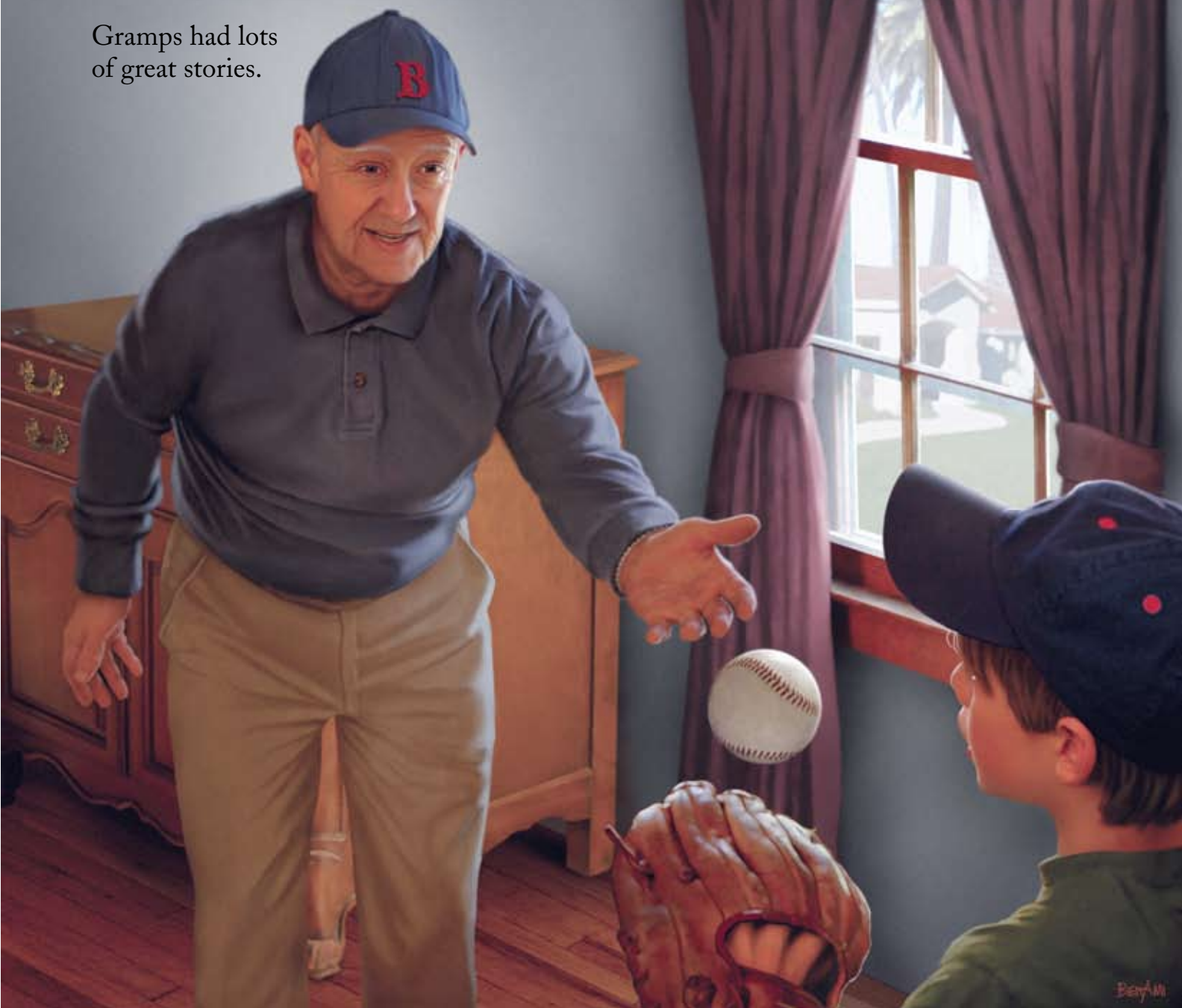
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Nathan loved baseball.

He went to baseball games. He watched baseball on TV. He enjoyed baseball movies, like *The Sandlot*. He read baseball books. He collected baseball cards. He talked about baseball with his family and friends. He even dreamed about baseball.

But more than anything, Nathan loved to talk about baseball with his grandfather. Gramps had played second base for seven years in the minor leagues. And for one season he played in the majors, for the Boston Red Sox, with Ted Williams.

Gramps had lots of great stories.





“Joe DiMaggio is up, one out, man on first. I picture what’s going to happen next. The ball would come to my right, I’d nab it, toss it, and the game would end on a double play.”

“What happened, Gramps?”

Nathan knew the story as well as Gramps. But they both liked to pretend the story had never been told and never been heard.

“Joe smashes a grounder, the ball hits the arch of my left shoe, and it bounces to Billy Goodman at first. He throws the ball to second, and the game ends on a double play—right off my foot!”

Gramps laughed long and hard. Nathan laughed too.





“Gramps, can I see your baseball?” Nathan asked.

Gramps had more than one baseball. But he knew which one Nathan meant. He reached over to the glass case, opened it, and took the ball off the stand. He handed it to Nathan.

“That really is Ted Williams’s signature, isn’t it, Gramps?”

“Yep. It sure is. Baseball fans will never stop talking about Ted.”

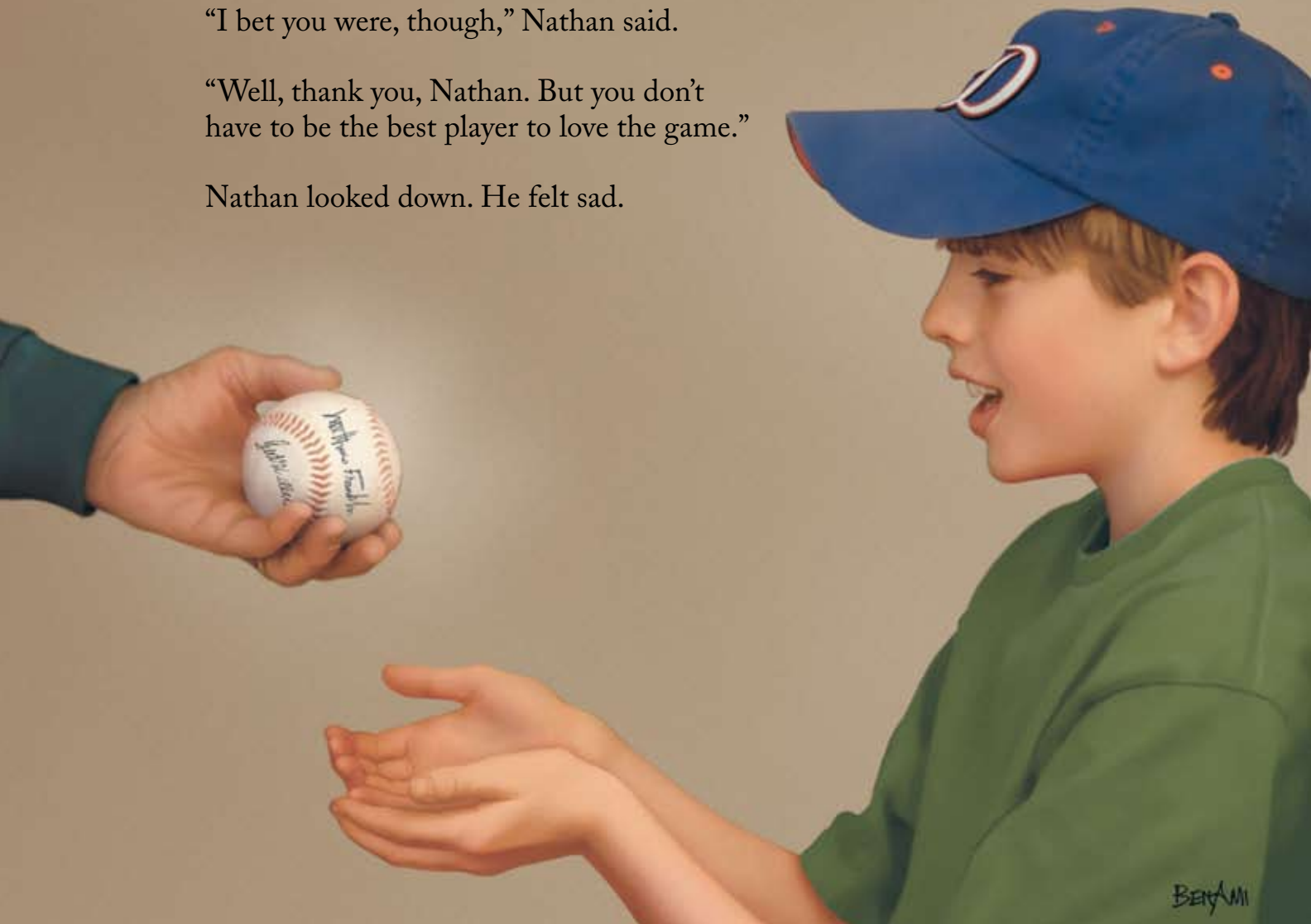
Nathan turned the ball over. “And here’s your signature, Gramps, on the same ball with Ted Williams’s.”

Gramps said, “Of course, your grandpa wasn’t nearly as good as Ted Williams, that’s for sure.” He chuckled.

“I bet you were, though,” Nathan said.

“Well, thank you, Nathan. But you don’t have to be the best player to love the game.”

Nathan looked down. He felt sad.



NOTE TO PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS, AND OTHER ADULTS

My prayer is that this book provides you an opportunity to talk about Jesus and Heaven to the children you love. I pray also that it helps you lead children to faith in Jesus, the King of kings. Ask the Holy Spirit to make you sensitive to the needs and interests of the children in your life. Then share some of the following points whenever it seems appropriate—especially after reading the book together.

The World God Made

- God made the earth, the sun and moon, and all the stars and planets. And he made the animals, then Adam and Eve. He put them in the beautiful Garden of Eden to work and rule the earth and to enjoy God and each other. It was a perfect place. (See Genesis 1–2.)
- Adam and Eve sinned by disobeying God. This is known as the Fall. Now we are under the Curse. People—and the earth—are no longer perfect. (See Genesis 3.) This is all because of our sin. God is perfectly holy, so he couldn't let people get away with sinning. Adam and Eve had to leave the Garden, and work became harder. Suddenly there was suffering and death. Minds and hearts and bodies didn't work right anymore. It was very sad.
- God never gave up his original plan. That plan is for people who love and obey him to rule a perfect earth, like the one God originally created.

Jesus and Us

- Jesus, God's Son, came from Heaven to earth. He became a human being and grew up to be a carpenter. Carpenters make things and fix things. Someday Jesus will fix us up so we'll be perfect forever. He will make the earth perfect forever too! Jesus said that everything will be made like new again (see Matthew 19:28 and Revelation 21:5).
- Jesus loves us so much that he died on the cross for our sins. Then he came back to life. That's called his resurrection. When we believe that this is true and ask Jesus to forgive us, he becomes our Savior!
- We can let Jesus take charge of our lives because he knows what's best for us. (Sometimes that includes difficult things, such as having a disability or sad things happening.) Letting Jesus be our King means we can enjoy having him as our friend and leader, now and forever.

Heaven and Us

- When people die, those who know Jesus as their Savior and King will go to Heaven. Life there is much better than it is here and now (see Philippians 1:21-23).

- When people we love go to Heaven, we feel sad because we miss them. But we can be happy that they are in a wonderful place. If we love Jesus, we will see them again and live with them forever. (I don't think that those who die old will look old, as in the book's final scene. We did this only to make it clear who the characters are.)
- After Jesus comes back to earth, Heaven will be even more wonderful, because God will come down to live with us in a perfect New Earth. Even animals will no longer suffer. (See Romans 8:19-21.) It will be like the Garden of Eden, but better. Nothing bad or sad will be there (see Revelation 20:10; 21:1-4).
- On the New Earth we will eat and laugh and play. We will have resurrection bodies like Jesus has (see Philippians 3:20-21). We know Jesus has a physical body, because after his resurrection he ate and let people touch him. He said, "A ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have" (see Luke 24:38-43).
- There will be a great city, the New Jerusalem, where we will worship God and serve him and rule the earth with him forever (see Revelation 21:1-2; 22:3-5). This means that we will never be bored. There will always be fun and exciting things to do! We will do what people were made to do—worship and talk and walk and eat and run and play and rest.
- People of all different races and nations will be on the New Earth, and they will bring beautiful things to God, the King on the throne in the New Jerusalem (see Revelation 21:23-26). Since God will live there, the New Earth will be at the center of Heaven.
- The tree of life, which was in the Garden of Eden, will be there, and we will eat from it (see Revelation 2:7; 22:1-2).
- God will live with us, and we'll never cry or get sick or have pain or disabilities (see Revelation 21:3-4). We'll live forever with Jesus, the *person* we were made for, and we'll live in Heaven, the *place* we were made for!