Abraham and David

Let's start with a very easy Christmas question. Kids, who is the baby in the manger?

Jesus.

But there's a deeper question: 'who is Jesus?'

And to help answer that, we can look at Jesus' family tree - and see where he came from.

Because, do any of you have a favourite Christmas film: Like Paw Patrol 'Pups Save Christmas' - which sounds like an epic; or Elf, Grinch, Muppet Christmas Carol, or Home Alone?

Those are great… but they're nothing compared to the real story of Christmas.

Because right at the start of Matthew's gospel, Matthew gives us Jesus' family tree - with all the names of all the men in Jesus' family. Which at first glance does not look much of a story.

But look closer and there are 5 women hidden among them: like Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba, and Mary. And their stories have everything in them!

But if there are only 5 women, look at all the men!

And from now until Christmas that's who were going to be looking at.

At which point you might think: 'but there are masses of them! Martin's going to talk for hours! And I'm going to fall asleep and fall off my chair.'

Except look right at the top - and two men are singled out: who are they?

David and Abraham.

'The genealogy [that's a family tree] of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.'

So why single them out? And the answer is - because of the promises God made to them.

So, can anyone tell me: what promise did God make to Abraham?

Abraham and his wife Sarah were old. And it looked like they were never going to have children.

But God promised Abraham - you are going to have lots of children and grandchildren.

How many children do you think he promised? 1, 4, 9? More?

God promised Abraham a whole nation! He said, Abraham, you know when you look at the stars in the sky, or all the grains of sand on the beach, and you can't count them? Well, you won't be able to count all your offspring - that's how many I'm going to give you.

But there was another promise God made to Abraham: that from his family would come One Son who would bless the world… and defeat his enemies.

But which enemy? Does he mean the bully in the school playground or the other team who beats your team?

No.

You see right back at the very beginning, the Bible tells us that Adam and Eve, the very first mother and father, sinned and turned away from God.

Which is bad. But who persuaded them to do it?

The serpent!

And all the bad things and sad things in the world have all come from that first sin.

But right back then, God made the very first promise: that from the woman, a son would come who would crush the serpent.

And now God is saying to Abraham, that Son is going to come from your family. A son who will bless the world, and defeat his enemies by crushing the serpent.

Ok, that's Abraham, but what about David?

Can anyone tell me, who was David?

Israel's greatest king.

But what promise did God make to David?

That from him would come a Son who would reign as king forever.

But can anyone tell me - tricky question - what do good kings do?

They rule with justice and protect their people from their enemies. And in the good old stories - if there were dragons in the land - the king would slay them.

And so God's promise in the Garden, and his promise to Abraham, are now focusing in on David. That from him will come a Son, who will crush the serpent, and bless the world, and be a king who reigns with justice forever.

But the years went by… and nearly everyone had given up hope that any of those promises would ever come true.

Until an angel came to Mary.

And what did the angel say to Mary?

Mary you are going to carry that Son. You are going to give birth to the King who will rule on David's throne forever.

And it's the star of that new born king that the wise men saw. It's that new born king that the wise men came to worship.

The serpent-crushing, world-blessing, ever-reigning king.

So, one more time, what's his name?

Jesus.

That's who the baby in the manger is.

Except… how does he crush the serpent… and bless the world… and reign forever?

Well this king - our king - the Lord Jesus - son of David and son of Abraham, goes into the greatest of battles - against our greatest enemies, sin and death - and at the cross he wasn't crowned with gold, but with thorns. And he takes all the punishment we deserve for all the times we've turned away from God.

But because he wasn't just a good king, but the perfect king, sin and death could not hold him. And three days later he rose again, squashing the serpent.

But it all begins at Christmas - as the greatest king: son of David, son of Abraham is born and laid in a manger. Because he’s the one who has come to heal every hurt and bless the world.