

God's promise to Abraham (Genesis 12)

We have been learning about Noah. Now, we are going to learn about someone in Noah's family who lived a long time after Noah had died.

This man was called Abraham; in fact Abraham was Noah's great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great grandson!!

Abraham lived in a place called Ur with the rest of his family - his wife Sarah, his dad Terah, his nephew Lot, who lived with them and all the people who looked after the animals. In those days people didn't live in houses like we do now. Abraham's family lived in tents with their sheep and goats and other animals all around them. Their animals needed grass to eat and they all needed water to drink. They decided to move from Ur so, one day, they packed up the tents and all their belongings and gathered all the animals together and this big group - Abraham and Sarah, Abraham's dad Terah and Abraham's nephew Lot and all the people who looked after the animals - set out on a long journey.

When they had travelled a long way, they decided to set up their home in a place called Haran. So, the big group stopped - Abraham and Sarah, Abraham's dad Terah and Abraham's nephew, Lot and all the people who looked after the animals - and they unpacked and set up the tents and the places for the animals. They stayed in Haran for quite a long time. Abraham and Sarah did not have any children.

God was watching over Abraham and God had a special promise for him.

God said:

"Abraham, leave the country where you are living and go to a new place that I will show you!"

God promised to give Abraham a very big family, so big it would become a whole nation of people. God said to Abraham, 'Look at all the stars in the sky and the grains of sand on the ground. God said that there would be many, many people in Abraham's family like the stars and the grains of sand. Abraham looked up and he looked down and he was amazed by what God said.

God also promised that he would use Abraham's huge family to be kind to other people as well - people all over the world. Abraham and Sarah would be the start of an enormous, worldwide family of people who would live with God as their king. It would be God's family, starting with Abraham.

After hearing's these amazing promises Abraham got up and told the others what had happened and that they were moving again. He told Sarah and his nephew Lot and the people who looked after the animals. Abraham's dad Terah had got very old and had died by that time. Abraham's family all packed up their things and the people who looked after the animals also packed up their things and they all set off on their journey, not knowing where God was going to take them.

Have you ever been camping? Imagine packing up for a camping trip but there are lots of you and sheep and goats and everything you own has to be moved (but no television!).

When they were travelling through a land called Canaan, God spoke to Abraham again. "I promise you that one day I will give your big family this land to live in." Abraham was pleased and he said, 'Thank you' to God and then he went on towards the place where God was taking Him.

Later on, Sarah had a baby - the baby that God had promised as the start of the huge family. It was a boy and they called him Isaac.

When Isaac grew up, he married a woman called Rebekah and they had sons called Esau and Jacob. God's family was growing. We will hear more about Jacob next.