

Trinity, condescends to talk with Abraham and to disclose his plans in the government of the world. See John 3: 56. Abraham sitting at his tent door sees what he supposes to be three men approaching. He rises according to the Eastern ideas of hospitality and asks to be allowed to entertain them. After they had been hospitably entertained they rise to go away and Abraham goes with them to bring them on their way. Two of them go on towards Sodom and one the Angel of the Covenant remains to talk with Abraham and to reveal to him the fate in store for the cities of the Plain. Abraham is thus highly favored on account of his position as the head of the chosen family to whom he was to teach God's righteous ways.

LESSON PLAN. I. The Blessing of Abraham. vs. 17-18. II. The Faithfulness of Abraham. vs. 19. III. The Compassion of God. vs. 20, 21.

I. THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM. 17. Shall I hide from Abraham—Ps 25: 14; John 15: 15; Prov. 3: 32 "All the principles of the divine providence in its relations to the sins of men appear here, his forbearance and patience, his constant notice, the deciding test, and the strictness and righteousness of the judgment; and hence Abraham is told here, that these same principles might operate on the minds of the people of God in all ages" (Gosman) The Lord the name of Jehovah is often used as the same with the Angel of Jehovah Angel of the Lord, see Gen 16: 7, 11, 13; 18: 14, 17; Exodus 3: 2, 4, 6, Judges. 6. 11, 14, &c. The Angel of the Lord is then the incarnate Son, The God-man Mediator, who even before he became incarnate was the light of the world. The methods of Divine Providence in its action towards the sins of men are here brought out. God's long-suffering, his forbearance, his patience, his watchfulness, his strictness in deciding, and his righteousness in the execution of his judgments appear. Notice the honor placed upon Abraham in the Lord's saying "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do." The earthly father does not take every son into his confidence in connection with his temporal concerns and so God selects Abraham from among his children as the one worthy to be honored in this way 18. The three Angels had appeared to Abraham in the first place to indicate to him that his wife Sarah should bear a son, and that through this son, Isaac, the promises should be handed on to others who were to follow. Since Abraham and his descendants were to be the channel through which all religious blessings were to flow for mankind and since the nation descended from Abraham was to be numerous and great in influence, God treated him as a representative and disclosed to him his purposes towards Sodom and Gomorrah. All the nations of the earth have been blessed in Abraham to some extent even to-day. There is no true civilization unaccompanied by the religion of Jesus and this civilization, accompanied by the religion of Jesus, is gradually leavening the people of all lands. The destruction of the cities of the Plain, Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, was intended as a protest against wickedness and as a memorial for future generations. The cup of wickedness of the people was full and punishment had now to be inflicted. God's judgments are certain at last although he is merciful and does not will the death of the sinner. God's reasons for telling Abraham were three (1). He shall become a mighty nation. As the founder of it he ought to understand why God executes judgment as well as why he shows mercy. Justice as well as grace has to be recognized. (2) All the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him. So he is specially concerned with the fact that the persistently wicked shall perish. There is salvation provided, but if it is not received the sinner must suffer, (2 Pet. 2: 6).

II. THE FAITHFULNESS OF ABRAHAM. 19. (3) I know him. R. V. "I have known him." (Amos 3: 2; Hos. 13: 4, 6) When God is said to "know" a person it means that he has singled him out as the object of his love and favor. The reason why God had thus chosen Abraham is in order that he might train up a godly race of descendants. "The destruction of the cities would serve as an enduring monument in which Israel should have constantly before its eyes the destruction of the ungodly. God wished Abraham to understand clearly and to teach his descendants, that the dreadful catastrophe was not a violent outburst of natural forces only, but a punishment sent from God upon a sinful community. Also he taught him further that there was a point beyond which divine forbearance would not go. That the LORD may bring upon Abraham—His performance of these duties was the condition on which God would fulfil his promises. God helps him to be faithful. Family religion is made use of by God to conserve and spread his dealings with men in Christ. Abraham is to be a faithful father and householder and train his family and household in the ways of the Lord. This is a household covenant made not only with Abraham but with his children after him. Our Saviour says—"Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven. "And he took them in his arms and blessed them." It is our duty to train our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord