

Abraham assaults them at night, and in the confusion and darkness defeats them utterly. He already acts as lord and protector of the promised land.

V. 17.—*Shereh*—a “dale” (probably) in the neighborhood of Jerusalem.

V. 18.—*Melchizedec*, king of righteousness; equivalent to *Adonizedec*. *Salem*, Jerusalem. The word *Salem* means peace: thus this wonderful man was by name king of righteousness, and by rule king of peace. He was a true priest of God, “the last remaining blossom of a past development,” retaining the knowledge of God as revealed to Noah. He was “greater than Abraham” in that he was in full and peaceful possession of a place to which Abraham only looked forward. *Melchizedec had already* the kingdom and priesthood which in future were to be possessed by Abraham’s seed. CHRIST is the true “king of righteousness” and “king of peace,” and “priest of the most high God.”

*Melchizedec’s* genealogy is not told: read Heb. vii. “*Bread and wine*” to refresh Abraham, and to serve as symbols of that refreshment enjoyed by the true children of Abraham in the Lord’s supper.

V. 20.—*Tithes*—a tenth part of all the spoil was given by Abraham to *Melchizedec* as a priest. Thus the Aaronic priesthood paid tithes “in Abraham” to a priest of a different order, the type of Christ.

Vv. 21–24.—Abraham’s conduct shows that he did not go to war for spoil. Lot goes again to Sodom!

#### LESSONS.

1. We should help our friends when they are in difficulty.

2. God is the possessor of heaven and earth.

3. From Lot’s experience let us learn the great danger of associating with the wicked.

#### DOCTRINE TO BE PROVED.

*Melchizedec* is a type of Christ. Psalm cx. 4; Heb. v. 6, and vi. 20.

#### FOURTH SABBATH.

SUBJECT: *Abraham justified by faith.* Gen. xv. 1–21.

Let it ever be borne in mind, in these lessons, that God’s design in calling Abraham, was to separate a people from the nations fast sinking into idolatry,—Josh. xxiv. 2; and to found in the word a visible church, in which should be preserved the knowledge and worship of his name as the one living and true God. With this view God repeatedly appeared to Abraham, and trained him to exercise implicit faith in his being, faithfulness, and power. Abraham was to be the father, and, in a sense, the

founder of the church, and for that high office God trained him.

V. 1.—Abraham has just returned from his expedition against the confederate kings, having thoroughly humbled them, and rescued the captives and the spoil taken in Sodom. On reflection it would appear to him not improbable that these powerful chiefs would rally their forces and attack him in his quiet home in Hebron. To meet these fears, God promises him protection. Fear not, *I am thy shield*. Abraham had generously refused to retain any of the spoil,—xiv. 23; and as the reward of his generosity God says, *I am thy reward*.

Vv. 2, 3.—Abraham has been encouraged to expect a numerous seed, and God’s blessing upon them, and through him all the families of the earth; and, consequently, as long as he remains childless, there is no prospect of the promise being fulfilled. He has already waited long for the promise, and his faith begins to waver. He has even thought of adopting as his heir, his servant Eliezer.

Vv. 4–6.—Here God corrects Abraham’s rising fears, and assures him that his own child shall be his heir. And to impress this more forcibly, leads him forth from his tent, on a bright starry night, and bids him count the stars, if he can; and adds, *so shall thy seed be*. Abraham’s doubts vanishes, and he believes in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness. In Rom. iv. the apostle refers to this incident in the life of Abraham, as an example of justification by faith. Be careful to explain that it is not the act of faith or believing that is counted for righteousness, but the object of faith. Abraham’s eye had regard to the promise, and his faith rested on God’s faithfulness. So we must be saved, not by works, but by believing in Jesus. This may be illustrated by the wounded Israelite looking to the serpent,—Num. xxi.; John iii. 14.

Vv. 7–11.—Having promised Abraham a numerous seed, God now renews to him the promise of Canaan, as the home of his posterity. Verse 7. Abraham having experienced the happy effects of a sign asks another, not from unbelief, but to strengthen his faith. Ver. 8. At God’s bidding he prepares a sacrifice. Ver. 9, 10. While Abraham is waiting, probably, for fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice, in token of God’s acceptance, the birds of prey come down on the carcasses. In like manner, when we would worship God, sinful thoughts like unclean birds, often interrupt our worship; let us, by watchfulness and prayer, drive them away. Jam. iv. 7. On another occasion Abraham left his servant and asses behind him, when he went to offer sacrifice. Gen. xxii. 5.

V. 12.—Abraham has been engaged with God all the day. The vision mentioned in