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GENESIS 14:1 In the days of Amraphel, king of Shinar, Arioch, king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, and Tidal, king of Goiim,

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The war of four confederate kings against the five kings of Canaan, Gen 14:1-3. The confederate kings overrun and pillage the whole country, Gen 14:4-7. Battle between them and the kings of Canaan, Gen 14:5, Gen 14:9. The latter are defeated, and the principal part of the armies of the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah slain, Gen 14:10; on which these two cities are plundered, Gen 14:11. Lot, his goods, and his family, are also taken and carried away, Gen 14:12. Abram, being informed of the disaster of his nephew, Gen 14:13, arms three hundred and eighteen of his servants, and pursues them, Gen 14:14; overtakes and routs them, and recovers Lot and his family, and their goods, Gen 14:15, Gen 14:16; is met on his return by the king of Sodom, and by Melchizedek, king of Salem, with refreshments for himself and men, Gen 14:17, Gen 14:18. Melchizedek blesses Abram, and receives from him, as priest of the most high God, the tenth of all the spoils, Gen 14:19, Gen 14:20. The king of Sodom offers to Abram all the goods he has taken from the enemy, Gen 14:21; which Abram positively refuses, having vowed to God to receive no recompense for a victory of which he knew God to be the sole author, Gen 14:22, Gen 14:23; but desires that a proportion of the spoils be given to Aner, Eshcol and Mamre, who had accompanied him on this expedition, Gen 14:24.

#### Verse 1

In the days of Amraphel - Who this king was is not known; and yet, from the manner in which he is spoken of in the text, it would seem that he was a person well known, even when Moses wrote this account. But the Vulgate gives a different turn to the place, by rendering the passage thus: Factum est in illo tempore, ut Amraphel, etc. "It came to pass in that time that Amraphel, etc." The Chaldee Targum of Onkelos makes Amraphel king of Babylon, others make him king of Assyria; some make him the same as Nimrod, and others, one of his descendants.

Arioch king of Ellasar - Some think Syria is meant; but conjecture is endless where facts cannot be ascertained. Chedorlaomer king of Elam - Dr. Shuckford thinks that this was the same as Ninyas, the son of Ninus and Semiramis; and some think him to be the same with Keeumras, son of Doolaved, son of Arphaxad, son of Shem, son of Noah; and that Elam means Persia; see Gen 10:22. The Persian historians unanimously allow that Keeumras, whose name bears some affinity to Chedorlaomer, was the first king of the Peeshdadian dynasty.

Tidal king of nations - גויים goyim, different peoples or clans. Probably some adventurous person, whose subjects were composed of refugees from different countries.

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GENESIS 14:2 they made war with Bera, king of Sodom, and with Birsha, king of Gomorrah, Shinab, king of Admah, and Shemeber, king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (the same is Zoar).

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#### Verse 2

These made war with Bera, etc. - It appears, from Gen 14:4, that these five Canaanitish kings had been subdued by Chedorlaomer, and were obliged to pay him tribute; and that, having been enslaved by him twelve years, wishing to recover their liberty, they revolted in the thirteenth; in

consequence of which Chedorlaomer, the following year, summoned to his assistance three of his vassals, invaded Canaan, fought with and discomfited the kings of the Pentapolis or five cities - Sodom, Gomorrah, Zeboiim, Zoar, and Admab, which were situated in the fruitful plain of Siddim, having previously overrun the whole land.

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GENESIS 14:3 All these joined together in the valley of Siddim (the same is the Salt Sea).

GENESIS 14:4 Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year, they rebelled.

GENESIS 14:5 In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer came, and the kings who were with him, and struck the Rephaim in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzim in Ham, and the Emim in Shaveh Kiriathaim,

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#### Verse 5

Rephaims - A people of Canaan: Gen 15:20.

Ashteroth - A city of Basan, where Og afterwards reigned; Jos 13:31.

Zuzims - Nowhere else spoken of, unless they were the same with the Zamzummims, Deu 2:20, as some imagine.

Emims - A people great and many in the days of Moses, and tall as the Anakim. They dwelt among the Moabites, by whom they were reputed giants; Deu 2:10, Deu 2:11.

Shaveh Kiriathaim - Rather, as the margin, the plain of Kiriathaim, which was a city afterwards belonging to Sihon king of Heshbon; Jos 13:19.

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GENESIS 14:6 and the Horites in their Mount Seir, to Elparan, which is by the wilderness.

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#### Verse 6

The Horites - A people that dwelt in Mount Seir, till Esau and his sons drove them thence; Deu 2:22.

El-paran - The plain or oak of Paran, which was a city in the wilderness of Paran; Gen 21:21.

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GENESIS 14:7 They returned, and came to En Mishpat (the same is Kadesh), and struck all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, that lived in Hazazon Tamar.

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#### Verse 7

En-mishpat - The well of judgment; probably so called from the judgment pronounced by God on Moses and Aaron for their rebellion at that place; Num 20:1-10.

Amalekites - So called afterwards, from Amalek, son of Esau; Gen 36:12.

Hazezon-tamar - Called, in the Chaldee, Engaddi; a city in the land of Canaan, which fell to the lot of Judah; Jos 15:62. See also 2Chr 20:2. It appears, from Sol 1:14, to have been a very fruitful place.

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GENESIS 14:8 The king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (the same is Zoar) went out; and they set the battle in array against them in the valley of Siddim;

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Verse 8

Bela, the same is Zoar - That is, it was called Zoar after the destruction of Sodom, etc., mentioned in Genesis 19.

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GENESIS 14:9 against Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar; four kings against the five.

GENESIS 14:10 Now the valley of Siddim was full of tar pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and they fell there, and those who remained fled to the hills.

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Verse 10

Slime-pits - Places where asphaltus or bitumen sprang out of the ground; this substance abounded in that country.

Fell there - It either signifies they were defeated on this spot, and many of them slain, or that multitudes of them had perished in the bitumen-pits which abounded there; that the place was full of pits we learn from the Hebrew, which reads here בארת בארת beeroth beeroth, pits, pits, i.e., multitudes of pits. A bad place to maintain a fight on, or to be obliged to run through in order to escape.

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GENESIS 14:11 They took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their food, and went their way.

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Verse 11

They took all the goods, etc. - This was a predatory war, such as the Arabs carry on to the present day; they pillage a city, town, or caravan; and then escape with the booty to the wilderness, where it would ever be unsafe, and often impossible, to pursue them.

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GENESIS 14:12 They took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who lived in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

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## Verse 12

They took Lot, etc. - The people, being exceedingly wicked, had provoked God to afflict them by means of those marauding kings; and Lot also suffered, being found in company with the workers of iniquity. Every child remembers the fable of the Geese and Cranes; the former, being found feeding where the latter were destroying the grain, were all taken in the same net. Let him that readeth understand.

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GENESIS 14:13 One who had escaped came and told Abram, the Hebrew. Now he lived by the oaks of Mamre, the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner; and these were allies of Abram.

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## Verse 13

Abram the Hebrew - See note on Gen 10:21. It is very likely that Abram had this appellation from his coming from beyond the river Euphrates to enter Canaan; for העברי haibri, which we render the Hebrew, comes from עבר abar, to pass over, or come from beyond. It is supposed by many that he got this name from Eber or Heber, son of Salah; see Gen 11:15. But why he should get a name from Heber, rather than from his own father, or some other of his progenitors, no person has yet been able to discover. We may, therefore, safely conclude that he bears the appellation of Hebrew or Ibrite from the above circumstance, and not from one of his progenitors, of whom we know nothing but the name, and who preceded Abram not less than six generations; and during the whole of that time till the time marked here, none of his descendants were ever called Hebrews; this is a demonstration that Abram was not called the Hebrew from Heber; see Gen 11:15-27.

These were confederate with Abram - It seems that a kind of convention was made between Abram and the three brothers, Mamre, Eshcol, and Aner, who were probably all chieftains in the vicinity of Abram's dwelling: all petty princes, similar to the nine kings before mentioned.

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GENESIS 14:14 When Abram heard that his relative was taken captive, he led out his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued as far as Dan.

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## Verse 14

He armed his trained servants - These amounted to three hundred and eighteen in number: and how many were in the divisions of Mamre, Eshcol, and Aner, we know not; but they and their men certainly accompanied him in this expedition. See Gen 14:24.

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GENESIS 14:15 He divided himself against them by night, he and his servants, and struck them, and pursued them to Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus.

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## Verse 15

And he divided himself against them - It required both considerable courage and address in Abram to lead him to attack the victorious armies of these four kings with so small a number of troops, and on this occasion both his skill and his courage are exercised. His affection for Lot appears to have been his chief motive; he cheerfully risks his life for that nephew who had lately chosen the best part of the land, and left his uncle to live as he might, on what he did not think worthy his own acceptance. But it is the property of a great and generous mind, not only to forgive, but to forget offenses; and at all times to repay evil with good.

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GENESIS 14:16 He brought back all the goods, and also brought back his relative, Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.

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#### Verse 16

And he brought back - the women also - This is brought in by the sacred historian with peculiar interest and tenderness. All who read the account must be in pain for the fate of wives and daughters fallen into the hands of a ferocious, licentious, and victorious soldiery. Other spoils the routed confederates might have left behind; and yet on their swift asses, camels, and dromedaries, have carried off the female captives. However, Abram had disposed his attack so judiciously, and so promptly executed his measures, that not only all the baggage, but all the females also, were recovered.

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GENESIS 14:17 The king of Sodom went out to meet him, after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, at the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).

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#### Verse 17

The king of Sodom went out to meet him - This could not have been Bera, mentioned Gen 14:2, for it seems pretty evident, from Gen 14:10, that both he and Birsha, king of Gomorrah, were slain at the bitumen-pits in the vale of Siddim; but another person in the meantime might have succeeded to the government.

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GENESIS 14:18 Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine: and he was priest of God Most High.

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#### Verse 18

And Melchizedek, king of Salem - A thousand idle stories have been told about this man, and a thousand idle conjectures spent on the subject of his short history given here and in Heb. vii. At present it is only necessary to state that he appears to have been as real a personage as Bera, Birsha, or Shinab, though we have no more of his genealogy than we have of theirs.

Brought forth bread and wine - Certainly to refresh Abram and his men, exhausted with the late battle and fatigues of the journey; not in the way of sacrifice, etc.; this is an idle conjecture.

He was the priest of the most high God - He had preserved in his family and among his subjects the worship of the true God, and the primitive patriarchal institutions; by these the father of every family was both king and priest, so Melchizedek, being a worshipper of the true God, was priest among the people, as well as king over them.

Melchizedek is called here king of Salem, and the most judicious interpreters allow that by Salem, Jerusalem is meant. That it bore this name anciently is evident from Psa 76:1, Psa 76:2 : "In Judah is God known; his name is great in Israel. In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion." From the use made of this part of the sacred history by David, Psa 110:4, and by St. Paul, Heb 7:1-10, we learn that there was something very mysterious, and at the same time typical, in the person, name, office, residence, and government of this Canaanitish prince. 1. In his person he was a representative and type of Christ; see the scriptures above referred to. 2. His name, מלכי צדק, malki tzedek, signifies my righteous king, or king of righteousness. This name he probably had from the pure and righteous administration of his government; and this is one of the characters of our blessed Lord, a character which can be applied to him only, as he alone is essentially righteous, and the only Potentate; but a holy man, such as Melchizedek, might bear this name as his type or representative. 3. Office; he was a priest of the most high God. The word כהן cohen, which signifies both prince and priest, because the patriarchs sustained this double office, has both its root and proper signification in the Arabic; kahana signifies to approach, draw near, have intimate access to; and from hence to officiate as priest before God, and thus have intimate access to the Divine presence: and by means of the sacrifices which he offered he received counsel and information relative to what was yet to take place, and hence another acceptation of the word, to foretell, predict future events, unfold hidden things or mysteries; so the lips of the priests preserved knowledge, and they were often the interpreters of the will of God to the people. Thus we find that Melchizedek, being a priest of the most high God, represented Christ in his sacerdotal character, the word priest being understood as before explained. 4. His residence; he was king of Salem. שלם shalom signifies to make whole, complete, or perfect; and hence it means peace, which implies the making whole the breaches made in the political and domestic union of kingdoms, states, families, etc., making an end of discord, and establishing friendship. Christ is called the Prince of peace, because, by his incarnation, sacrifice, and mediation, he procures and establishes peace between God and man; heals the breaches and dissensions between heaven and earth, reconciling both; and produces glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will among men. His residence is peace and quietness and assurance for ever, in every believing upright heart. He governs as the Prince and Priest of the most high God, ruling in righteousness, mighty to save; and he ever lives to make intercession for, and save to the uttermost all who come unto the Father by him. See the notes on Hebrews 7 (note).

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GENESIS 14:19 He blessed him, and said, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth:

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Verse 19

And he blessed him - This was a part of the priest's office, to bless in the name of the Lord, for ever. See the form of this blessing, Num 6:23-26; and for the meaning of the word to bless, see Gen 2:3 (note).

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GENESIS 14:20 and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand." Abram gave him a tenth of all.

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#### Verse 20

And he gave him tithes - A tenth part of all the spoils he had taken from the confederate kings. These Abram gave as a tribute to the most high God, who, being the possessor of heaven and earth, dispenses all spiritual and temporal favors, and demands the gratitude, and submissive, loving obedience, of all his subjects. Almost all nations of the earth have agreed in giving a tenth part of their property to be employed in religious uses. The tithes were afterwards granted to the Levites for the use of the sanctuary, and the maintenance of themselves and their families, as they had no other inheritance in Israel.

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GENESIS 14:21 The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the people, and take the goods for yourself."

GENESIS 14:22 Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have lifted up my hand to the LORD, God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth,

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#### Verse 22

I have lift up mine hand - The primitive mode of appealing to God, and calling him to witness a particular transaction; this no doubt generally obtained among the faithful till circumcision, the sign of the covenant, was established. After this, in swearing, the hand was often placed on the circumcised part; see Gen 24:2, Gen 24:9.

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GENESIS 14:23 that I will not take a thread nor a sandal strap nor anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich.'

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#### Verse 23

From a thread even to a shoelatchet - This was certainly a proverbial mode of expression, the full meaning of which is perhaps not known. Among the rabbinical writers חוּט chut, or חוּט chuti, signifies a fillet worn by young women to tie up their hair; taken in this sense it will give a good meaning here. As Abram had rescued both the men and women carried off by the confederate kings, and the king of Sodom had offered him all the goods, claiming only the persons, he answers by protesting against the accepting any of their property: "I have vowed unto the Lord, the proprietor of heaven and earth, that I will not receive the smallest portion of the property either of the women or men, from a girl's fillet to a man's shoe-tie."

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GENESIS 14:24 I will accept nothing from you except that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre. Let them take their portion."

## Verse 24

Save only that which the young men have eaten - His own servants had partaken of the victuals which the confederate kings had carried away; see Gen 14:11. This was unavoidable, and this is all he claims; but as he had no right to prescribe the same liberal conduct to his assistants, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre, he left them to claim the share that by right of conquest belonged to them of the recaptured booty. Whether they were as generous as Abram we are not told.

The great variety of striking incidents in this chapter the attentive reader has already carefully noted. To read and not understand is the property of the foolish and the inconsiderate. 1. We have already seen the danger to which Lot exposed himself in preferring a fertile region, though peopled with the workers of iniquity. His sorrows commence in the captivity of himself and family, and the loss of all his property, though by the good providence of God he and they were rescued. 2. Long observation has proved that the company a man keeps is not an indifferent thing; it will either be the means of his salvation or destruction. 3. A generous man cannot be contented with mere personal safety while others are in danger, nor with his own prosperity while others are in distress. Abram, hearing of the captivity of his nephew, determines to attempt his rescue; he puts himself at the head of his own servants, three hundred and eighteen in number, and the few assistants with which his neighbors, Mamre, Aner, and Eshcol, could furnish him; and, trusting in God and the goodness of his cause, marches off to attack four confederate kings! 4. Though it is not very likely that the armies of those petty kings could have amounted to many thousands, yet they were numerous enough to subdue almost the whole land of Canaan; and consequently, humanly speaking, Abram must know that by numbers he could not prevail, and that in this case particularly the battle was the Lord's. 5. While depending on the Divine blessing and succor he knew he must use the means he had in his power; he therefore divided his troops skilfully that he might attack the enemy at different points at the same time, and he chooses the night season to commence his attack, that the smallness of his force might not be discovered. God requires a man to use all the faculties he has given him in every lawful enterprise, and only in the conscientious use of them can he expect the Divine blessing; when this is done the event may be safely trusted in the hands of God. 6. Here is a war undertaken by Abram on motives the most honorable and conscientious; it was to repel aggression, and to rescue the innocent from the heaviest of sufferings and the worst of slavery, not for the purpose of plunder nor the extension of his territories; therefore he takes no spoils, and returns peaceably to his own possessions. How happy would the world be were every sovereign actuated by the same spirit! 7. We have already noticed the appearance, person, office, etc., of Melchizedek; and, without indulging in the wild theories of either ancient or modern visionaries, have considered him as the Scriptures do, a type of Christ. All that has been already spoken on this head may be recapitulated in a few words. 1. The Redeemer of the world is the King of righteousness; he creates it, maintains it, and rules by it. 2. His empire is the empire of peace; this he proclaims to them who are afar off, and to them that are nigh; to the Jew and to the Gentile. 3. He is Priest of the most high God, and has laid down his life for the sin of the world; and through this sacrifice the blessing of God is derived on them that believe. Reader, take him for thy King as well as thy Priest; he saves those only who submit to his authority and take his Spirit for the regulator of their heart, and his word for the director of their conduct. How many do we find, among those who would be sorry to be rated so low as to rank only with nominal Christians, talking of Christ as their Prophet, Priest, and King, who are not taught by his word and Spirit, who apply not for redemption in his blood, and who submit not to his authority! Reader, learn this deep and important truth: "Where I am there also shall my servant be; and he that serveth me, him shall my Father honor."