

Vayikra Rabbah 1:4

R. Abin in the name of R. Berekhiah the Elder opened [discourse by citing the following verse]: *Of old you spoke in a vision to your faithful ones, saying, "I have set the crown upon one who is mighty, I have exalted one chosen from the people"* (Ps. 89:20).

[The Psalmist] speaks of Abraham, with whom [God] spoke both in word and in vision. That is in line with the following verse of Scripture: *After these words the word of God came to Abram in a vision, saying* (Gen. 15:1). *To your faithful ones* (חסידים) [alludes to Abraham, of whom it is said], *You will show truth to Jacob, faithfulness* (חסד) *to Abraham* (Mic. 7:20). *Saying, "I have set the crown upon one who is mighty"* (Ps. loc. cit.) [also refers to Abraham], for he slew four kings in a single night, as it is written, *At night he and his servants defeated them and pursued them* (Gen. 14:15). R. Phineas said, And is there a case of someone who pursues people already slain? For it is written, *He ... defeated them and pursued them* (Gen. 14:15)! But [the usage at hand] teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, did the pursuing, and Abraham did the slaying. [Abin continues,] *I have exalted one chosen from the people* (Ps. 89:20). *You are the Lord God, who chose Abram, who brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans* (Neh. 9:7).

[*I have exalted on chosen from the people* (Ps. 89:20)] speaks of David, with whom God spoke both in speech and in vision. That is in line with the following verse of Scripture: *Nathan spoke to David in accordance with all these words and all this prophecy* (vision) (2 Sam. 7:17). *To your faithful ones* (חסידים) (Ps. 89:20) [refers] to David, [in line with the following verse:] *Keep my soul, for I am faithful* (חסיד) (Ps. 86:2). *Saying, I have set the crown upon one who is mighty* (Ps. 89:20). Rabbi Abba bar Kahana said, David made thirteen wars. The Rabbis said, Eighteen. But they do not really differ. He who said thirteen [thought of those David waged] on Israel's behalf, and the Rabbis who said eighteen thought of five he waged for his own benefit and of thirteen on behalf of Israel. *I have exalted one chosen from the people* (Ps. 89:20) refers to David, of whom it is said, *And he chose David, his servant* (Ps. 78:70).

[*Of old you spoke in a vision to your faithful one*] speaks of Moses, with whom [God] spoke in both speech and vision, in line with the following verse of Scripture: *With him do I speak mouth to mouth [in a vision and not in dark speeches]* (Num. 12:8). *To your faithful one* for [Moses] came from the tribe of Levi, the one concerning which it is written, *Let your Thummim and Urim be with your faithful one* (Dt. 33:8). *Saying I have set the crown upon one who is mighty*. The cited passage is to be read in accord with that which R. Tanhum b. Hanilai said, Under ordinary circumstances a burden which is too heavy for one person is light for two, or too heavy for two is light for four. But is it possible to suppose that a burden that is too weighty for six hundred thousand can be light for a single individual? Now the entire people of Israel was standing before Mount Sinai and saying, *If we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, then we shall die* (Deut. 5:22). But, for his part, Moses heard the voice of God himself and lived. You may know that that is indeed the case, for among them all, the word [of the Lord] called only to Moses, in line with that verse which states, *And [God] called to Moses* (Lev. 1:1). *I*

have exalted one chosen from the people (Ps. 89:20). He would have destroyed them had not Moses His chosen one confronted Him in the breach to avert His destructive wrath (Ps. 106:23).