

Genesis

Creation, Covenants, All Grace – study 12



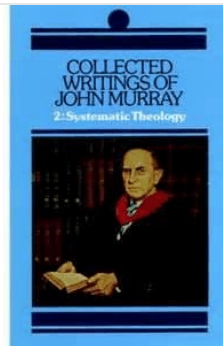
Election on the part of God in eternity is the source from which the process of salvation springs and it is the ultimate reason for the salvation of men -- they are chosen by God unto salvation (II Thess. 2:13). The fruits which accompany salvation supply to us men the proof of God's election (cf. I Thess. 1:3,4). This election took place in Christ before the foundation of the world and was to the end that the elect should be holy and without blame (Eph. 1:4). As election is eternal, so is it sovereign. No passage shows this more clearly than Rom. 9:11 where the differentiation between Esau and Jacob finds its explanation in, and is directed to the vindication of, "the purpose of God according to election."

-- John Murray, *Baker's Dictionary of Theology* p. 179

The ELECT LINE (RACE?) (11:10-26)

11:10-17 *What is the average lifespan of the 4 generations from Shem to the patriarch of the Hebrews, Eber?*

Calvinist theologian JOHN MURRAY takes Ephesians 1:4 literally. Do we agree on the WHEN and the WHY of Election?



11:18-26 *Do we detect a hint of significant changes between the ages of Eber and Abram?*

(1) Compared with Gen., ch. 5, this generation shows a further shortening of the life span; the procreative years also are earlier. This indicates the progressive decline of man's original state according to creation and at the same time prepares the reader for the miracle of Isaac's conception ... **Gerhard von Rad**, *Genesis* p. 152

The SIXTH TOLEDOTH BEGINS (11:27-32)

11:27-32 *What do vv. 31,32 reveal as to Abraham's (and Terah's) obedience to the Lord of the covenant?* (cf. 12:1; Acts 7:1-4)

(2) If we may believe that this movement, which is distinctly declared to have been one toward Canaan, was indeed in response to a call from God, and a movement of faith; then it is to be observed that it was a step in the right direction, but it lacked persistence. Terah paused halfway, and dwelt in Haran until he died. -- **G. Campbell Morgan**, *The Analyzed Bible: Genesis* p. 76

Terah paused halfway to the Promised Land. Do we have the faith of Abram, to go ALL the way, and to become Abraham, 'father of multitudes'?

(3) Joshua 24:2 shows that Terah and his forbears 'served other gods'; his own name and those of Laban, Sarah, and Milcah point towards the moon-god as perhaps the most prominent of these. Certainly Ur and Haran were centres of moon worship, which may suggest why the migration halted where it did (31). Terah's motive in leaving Ur may have been no more than prudence (the Elamites destroyed the city c. 1950 BC); but Abram had already heard the call of God (Acts 7:2-4). -- **Derek Kidner**, *Genesis* p. 111

(4) Throughout the entire story one must always remember that to leave home and to break ancestral bonds was to expect of ancient men almost the impossible. -- **Gerhard von Rad**, *op.cit.*, p. 157

Is ELECTION CONDITIONAL? (12:1-7)

12:1 *The Abraham covenant is preceded by a 3-part command. Was the covenant's fulfillment jeopardized by Abraham's reluctant obedience?*

(5) This is the first of the unconditional promises. If God's promises had conditions, they would never have been fulfilled, for we do not have the power to keep any condition. Therefore, the promises must be in pure grace, and without conditions. "I will make of thee a great nation." "But Lord," Abraham might have said, "suppose I get out of Thy will, or my posterity should become

idolators, or my descendants should crucify Thy Son?" "I will make of thee a great nation." The promise is not because of what Abraham might or might not do or be, but because of God's grace and His design. -- **Donald Grey Barnhouse**, *Genesis* p. 75

(6) These were very searching and pressing demands upon one who was the youngest son. Yet God's call to separation was a necessary condition of blessing. Separation was the keynote of Abraham's life from first to last, and in that separation to the will of God he found all his peace and blessing. -- **W.H. Griffith Thomas**, *Genesis I-XXV* p. 147

12:2 Although Jews, Muslims and Christians all agree that the second and third promises have been fulfilled, how do they differ on the identity of the "great nation"?

(7) A "nation" ... is a political unit with a common land, language, and government, whereas "people" ... primarily draws attention to the consanguinity of the group ... -- **G.J. Wenham**, *Genesis* p. 275

(8) There is only one man of those whose lives are recorded in the Old Testament who has the high privilege of being called the 'friend of God.' Isa. xli. 8, 'Abraham, My friend'; 2 Chron. xx. 7, 'Abraham, Thy friend'; (cf. Jas. ii. 23). To this day Abraham is known among the Arabs as *El Khalil* (Friend of God). -- **W.H. Griffith Thomas**, *op.cit.*, p. 144

Abraham – the only
man called 'friend of
God'

(9) But Lord, suppose Abraham becomes a liar; and his grandson, Jacob, becomes a crook; also his greatest son, David, becomes an adulterer and a murderer; and the nation descended from Abraham becomes so evil that it is necessary to scatter them in judgment throughout the earth? "I will bless you." But can man's sin never make Thee a liar? "I will bless you." Why, Lord? "Because I am the God of whom it is said: 'If we are faithless, he remains faithful -- for he cannot deny himself'" (II Timothy 2:13). This is unmerited grace. -- **Donald Grey Barnhouse**, *op.cit.*, p. 76

12:3 What is Moses' philosophy of history according to Genesis?

(10) Only eternity will reveal how true this has been in the history of the nations. Only the Gibeonites were spared when Israel entered the land of Canaan, for they sought to make a covenant with God's people. I believe that the Lord has blessed the United States because this nation is a haven for the persecuted Jews. ... When a man dies, a physician has to write on the death certificate the cause of death. When a nation dies, more often than not, the cause of death is that the nation has mistreated the Jews. When Ham rebelled against Shem, one by one, the tribes of Ham were destroyed or reduced to a minor state: Egypt, Canaan, the Hittites. When the Greeks overran Palestine and desecrated the altar in the Jewish temple, they were soon conquered by Rome. When Rome killed Paul and many others, and destroyed Jerusalem under Titus, Rome soon fell. Spain was reduced to a fifth-rate nation after the Inquisition against the

Jews; Poland fell after the pogroms; Hitler's Germany went down after its orgies of anti-Semitism; Britain lost her empire when she broke her faith with Israel. -- **Donald Grey Barnhouse**, *Genesis* p. 76

12:4-7 Two firsts in the revelation of v. 7. What precedent is set? (Deut. 4:7; Ps. 102:12-16; 147:19,20; Acts 7:2)

(11) This is, apart from iii. 8, the first Theophany related in Holy Scripture. Here for the first time is the revelation of God accompanied by His rendering Himself visible. This word of God at the terebinth of Moreh is the first foundation of Israel's legal right to Canaan. -- **F. Delitzsch**, *A New Commentary on Genesis Vol. 1* p. 382

(12) Within the book of Genesis no section is more significant than 11:27-12:9. It serves as an introduction to and summary of Abraham's career. It looks forward to the later patriarchs and beyond them to the nation of Israel and the Davidic monarchy, the great nation that will inherit the land of Canaan. It also looks back to the primeval history, announcing the divine intervention that will bring blessing to all the families of the world, whose history hitherto has been overshadowed by divine judgments from Eden to the flood of Babel. But in Abraham all the nations of the world will find blessing. Abraham's obedience to the divine call, forsaking his home and family for the worship of the LORD in the land of promise, stands as an example and an incentive to all his descendants to follow suit. This will bring blessing on themselves and to the world. -- **G.J. Wenham**, *op.cit.*, p. 281