

Throughout scriptures, we see several noteworthy themes. One of such is the theme of marriage. In the beginning, God had a beautiful relationship with Man, Adam and Eve. Man fell and this relationship was broken. God in an attempt to restore this relationship asked men to build a sanctuary that He may dwell among them, *Exodus 25:8-10*. Jesus in the new testament continued in this theme of marriage, the story of redemption ends with the marriage supper of the lamb, *Revelations 19-21*.

Another key theme which we have been considering is the theme of building. The idea of the tabernacle is that God will live among men. The buildings started from the tabernacle of Moses, moved to David's tent, Solomon's temple, Zerubbabel's temple, and Herod's temple. During the time of Zerubbabel's temple, there was a prophecy that the glory of the latter house would be greater than the former. This was fulfilled in Herod's temple. All these are physical. There was a need to source physical material for the physical building. Likewise, the word of God is the Spiritual material for the spiritual building, *acts 20:32*. Jesus introduced the Spiritual building when he entered Herod's temple, the temple of His body, *John 2:19*. The new testament temple made the old testament temple to be irrelevant, *Colossians 2:17*.

Hebrews 8:2 however, compares the two tabernacles. Moses was a minister of the old tabernacle, but Christ is the minister of the true tabernacle. The tabernacle of Moses was pitched by men; However, God is the builder of the new tabernacle. *Acts 20:32*.

Still on the theme of building, while Moses was administering the old tabernacle, he was looking for a city, *Hebrews 11:25-26*. Abraham also was looking for a city which had foundation whose city and builder was God, *Hebrews 11:12-15*. God is going about building today and that building is you and I, *1 Corinthians 6:19*. The Word of God is the Spiritual material for the Spiritual building; hence, the call is to take heed to the Word of God.

We are speaking of grace re-defined, a second look at grace according to the new testaments provision. Grace is a person, Jesus Christ revealed. When speaking of grace, there are two other definitions that go along, concepts to consider: Mercy and favour. Mercy is holding back a punishment to someone who deserves it. Grace on the other hand is giving advantage to someone who does not deserve it. Favour and grace are often interchangeable. Favour can be deserved or undeserved, hence grace is unmerited favour. Having these definitions in mind, we will proceed with the message.

Grace is unmerited favour. This simply means that grace is what makes the work of man useless, because a price has already been paid for Grace. Your fasting, prayers etc. cannot afford you grace. The fact that you cannot earn it is also because you do not deserve it. It is important to note that a lot of the provisions we have in Christ are given on the premise of God's grace. This includes mercy when someone deserves punishment. Mercy, love, a sound mind, etc. are all given on the premise of grace, *Romans 5:6*, *2 Timothy 1:7*. Grace finds man; man cannot find grace. *Romans 11* speaks of the election of grace; this is in respect to physical Israel and the gentiles. The concept that the physical Israel has been cast away is something that God never considered; this is why Paul uses the phrase 'God forbid' in relation to God forsaking Israel. The belief that God forsook Israel is because there is a lack of understanding on the aspect of God's love that involves rebuke. This is consistent with God's nature as a Father, *Revelations 3:19*. All Israel will be saved. Returning to *Romans 11:5*, there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

As a side note, Paul spoke about a symbolic 7000 who have not bowed their knees to Baal. What does it mean to not bow our knees to Baal or as *Revelations 13* says, to serve the beast? During the time of Israel, there were several systems, including the statue that Nebuchadnezzar built. There were several expressions of Baal. In our case, there is the system of entertainment, finance, religion etc. Anything that demands your worship and has a hold over you is Baal or an idol. When you get to a place where this thing is determining the course of your life, this is definitely an idol. The reason for emphasizing this is because there is help at this time, in the form of grace.

1 Peter 1:2 says *Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.* Peter speaking to the church called them elect. The word used here is similar to that used in *Ephesians 1:4* for 'chose' (eklegomai), which means a choice made independent of the chosen. This keeps us in a place of appreciation regardless of circumstance. This realization, that we are members of God's Ekklesia, is a motivation to consecration to God and His purpose.

Ephesians 2:2 says we were previously enrolled in a course, the course of this world, directed by the prince of the power of the air, which imparted disobedience. However, *Romans 12:2* warns us not to follow this course but urges us to be transformed. This transformation process, directed by renewing our mind by the Word of God, is also a conformation. Each time we enrol in this course directed by God, to renew our minds, we are telling God we accept His will over our lives. *Romans 8:29* shows the destination, that we

may be conformed to the image of His Son. What grace tries to do in you, is to form Christ in you. The Word predestination can be simply defined as a predefined destination. Christ is the destination for all believers; Christ being formed in us. Once we understand this, it changes our focus in life.

The practical process of predestination. A prophetic look:

Except God builds a house, the builder builds in vain. We will consider a practical approach to this building. Jesus gave up His soul unto death and this allowed him to be numbered among the transgressors, *Isaiah 53:6-10*. What does it mean to pour out our souls? It is to let the Lords Will ride over ours. Although man has free will, many will give up their will so that Christ will be formed in them.

Job 10:9, Isaiah 64:8 and Jeremiah 18:1-6 shows the relationship between the Lord and us, a clay and potter relationship. The potter in *Jeremiah 18:1-6* had a picture in mind when he picked up the clay, but because the clay was marred, he made something else. Likewise, the Lord has Jesus in mind for every believer, but He will not override the will of the believer without their permission. We will need to allow the Lord to work in us. We need to learn to rest in Him, in all confidence that the Potter will build in you, the beautiful blueprint we see in Christ in authority, character and love.

Romans 8:29 says *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

For a patient, a doctor will run a diagnosis, administer a treatment, and then run a prognosis (a foreknowledge) to predict the probable effect of the treatment. The Lord ran a diagnosis on us and saw sin as the diseases and He administered a treatment, Jesus. The foreknowledge of God is what ensures that there is a purpose attached to the life of every believer, *Jeremiah 1:4*. This foreknowledge also shows us that God knows every challenge we will ever go through in life. *Exodus 3:19*

And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

Acts 20:32 KJV

The grace of the Lord be with your Spirit