

Day 28

- When I first started this devotional, I had no idea where it would go, nor how long it would be. I didn't know I would be on a journey that is leading me to 365 days.
 - I began it because our youngest son was asking for encouragement through prayer; and as a group of us lifted him up in prayer, via text, I thought of all the scripture weapons he had in his arsenal, that he just needed to tap into. The next morning, I spent nearly an hour sending him scripture after scripture, wanting to strengthen his frame, to remind him of how rich is foundation really is, and that, at times, we need to dust it off, so we know what we are firmly standing on.
 - After those texts went out, I thought of all the amazing things of God that life and "the troubles" of this world have tried to block from view. And I knew God had birthed in me this daily teaching a long time ago. I dedicate each day to my boys because they will always be my heart, my first priority to encourage, edify, and yes, even still, occasionally instruct.
 - All of the things God is revealing through each of these daily devotionals comes from a lifetime of loving Him, yet from a relatively new place of revelation that God has lead me into. He set the first stones of my foundation when I was only 6 years old and so new to loving Him.
 - From those foundational stones, God carefully began to build in my life. Many times the enemy of our soul came in to do what he always tries to do: first, to steal. As we have gone into many places of great depth, we have seen through Adam's experience in the Garden, and then again displayed through Esau and Jacob, and then again through Haman — the first step is to steal.
 - Satan always wants to steal what we have — our birthright, our inheritance, our peace, our joy, our assurance, our finances, our children, our marriage, our jobs, our food supply, our homes, our family relationships — everything. Just as he is a liar from the beginning; he is a thief as well. Stealing is his first nature.
 - "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy." John 10:10.
 - Second, after he has stolen all he can, he moves in for the kill. He has been a killer from the first — After stealing Adam's birthright and inheritance, he reveled in the fact that he had brought death to the man and the woman, and not just to them, but to all who would come after them. His hand was in the lives and actions of Adam and Eve's first two children. Cain rose up in anger and jealousy, and killed his brother Abel.
 - Through that picture of those two brothers, God showed us Satan's actions played out in the natural — Satan's (Cain's) anger, hate, and jealousy for Adam/ all mankind (Abel) rose up and killed him. We saw the same scenario nearly played out in full repeat mode through Esau and Jacob, but God intervened, and this time, we see God's amazing redemption, and both brothers are saved and blessed.
 - After stealing and killing, then the thief, the enemy of our soul goes to his next phase of himself, destruction. He is never satisfied with just stealing everything in our lives; he isn't even satisfied with killing us; satan wants to totally destroy us, the thought of us, and to wipe from existence God's incredible love for us.
 - "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. **I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.**" John 10:10. Whatever satan plans or tries, God's plans are always far greater, and His truths reign over all Creation.
 - First to the Jew and then to the Gentile — Romans 2 — "Heidi, why did you just say that?" Great question.

- If you were born Jewish, you have been born into the race of people God has always called his Chosen People — sons and daughters of Abraham — All Jewish people are under the Abrahamic covenant — Now, from the foundations of the earth, God has always planned for all his children, Jew and Gentile alike, to be in Him and Him in us.
- Remember, it was Abraham, a Hebrew man, who made a covenant with God — he believed God, and God honored Abraham with a covenant relationship with Himself. Even in that, Abraham represents Adam, the first covenant man. Through Abraham's son Isaac, God strengthened the covenant promise, for Isaac was faithful in believing God as his father before him. Then, Isaac's son Jacob further honored God in believing him, and even wrestling with him, not letting go until he was blessed. (You can read about all I have just summarized in Genesis 18-33).
- They were all faithful to God's covenant with them; that is why they are listed together as covenant keepers with God — “So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged them.” Exodus 2:24-25. This scripture is referring to the time Moses was raised up to be a deliverer for the whole house of Israel. Of course, Moses is the representation or shadow of Jesus, who is the Great and Final Deliverer of all mankind.
- So, the first covenant after Adam was made with a Hebrew man, Abraham. So, the Jewish people represent God's firstborn son, His first fruits. The rest of us, who were not born Jewish, are considered Gentiles. And in the book of Romans, depending on the version of the Bible you are reading, will either say Gentile or Greek — in other words, not Jewish.
- So, as I have been saying, God is very intricate, and He leaves nothing out. So, when Romans 2 talks about first to the Jew and then to the Gentile, it means in everything. And before we get upset and want to feel it isn't fair; we must realize that in every family that has more than one child, the first born always experiences the love and care of the parents first — they were born first — then, as the rest are born, they will receive the same love and care (or should).
- God is showing many dimensions here, and we don't want to miss them. He is showing His faithfulness in keeping His covenant He made, even if the other side of the covenant isn't kept. He is also showing that Abraham represents Adam, the first covenant man, God's first born or first fruit.
- So, now let's look to the Last Adam, God's final and complete covenant Keeper, Jesus Christ — the Lamb of God. Everything in scripture ALWAYS points to Jesus, always. Why? Because Jesus is the Word — He is the fulfillment of God's covenant with mankind — He is the Kinsman Redeemer (which we will go into) — He is the perfect bridge for the “grafted in ones,” those who are not Jewish.
- How is Jesus a bridge for the “grafted in ones?” Another great question. Jesus, although fully Jewish by natural birth, also represents a Samaritan — a person whose mother is Jewish, but whose father is something else. Jesus' mother was Jewish and of the line of King David — His Father is Father God. (Later, this will be something that blows your mind when we look at the Good Samaritan story with fresh eyes.) So, Jesus being born fully Jewish, yet having Father God as Father is the perfect bridge to bring into Himself all mankind — first to the Jew and then to the Gentile.
- So, when we look at history or even history in the making, we must always thing to the Jew first and then to the Gentile — it is a pattern that has been woven into all time. We even see it in the account of the prodigal son (found in Luke 15:11-32). The first born son, the first fruit stayed with his father and served him. And when his troubled, now destitute brother comes home, after losing his entire inheritance, the first son sees his father embrace the younger son, bless

him, clean him up, and put the ring of the family on his finger, and then he has a huge party of celebration because his youngest son is restored.

- The oldest son is upset and angry at his father for his actions toward his younger brother because he feels it is unfair, for he has faithfully served his father the whole time. And his father says to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found." Luke 15:31-32.
 - We also see this same woven in pattern of first the Jew and then the Gentile in the parable of the workers in the vineyard found in Matthew 20. The owner hires people to work in his vineyard, then throughout the day he hires more, then at the end of the day, he hires more — all have been promised a full day's wage. In the end, when they are paid, those who worked the longest were angry that the ones who came at the very end of the day received the same wage.
 - Yes, that parable has many dimensions and applications, but it also shows the woven in concept of first the Jew and then the Gentile. For the Jewish people have been God's people since Father Abraham. The Gentiles were not fully grafted in until Jesus came, and died, and rose from the dead. Now, having said that, I know that Jesus died for past, present, and future, so His plan was perfect to always graft in the Gentiles. So technically, even from the foundations of the earth, the Gentiles were grafted in, but not represented in the natural until Jesus died and rose from the dead. I hope that makes sense.
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- You may be wondering why I walked us down this road — well, for all of us to fully understand what is coming in the the next few days, we have to understand basics of history — we must have a good understanding of how God weave's things into the fabric of His times and seasons — and understanding His first born Israel is important for us to understand how amazing it is that those of us, who were not born Jewish, were still always in God's plan from the foundation of the earth.
 - From here, I am going to take us into the book of Ruth — another amazing book in the Bible that shows us God's perfect plan of LOVE and REDEMPTION — and we will learn all about the Kinsman Redeemer — one of the most amazing examples of how much God loves us woven into his perfect plan.
 - Until tomorrow, be blessed and encouraged, knowing that whether Jew or Gentile, God has always had an amazing plan to show us His love and provision, and in any moment, all we have to do is call on the name of the Lord Jesus, and God will turn His face to us and save us from any and all trouble we have put ourselves into — and not only will He save us; He will redeem us! Now that is Powerful!