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C0416 -- April 21, 2004 -- Ephesians 1:1b-2 -- Deity of Christ

Ephesians: Lesson 3: Deity of Christ

Eph. 1:1b-2

Review: Author and his office of apostle.

“PAUL”

Paul was the author of this mighty epistle. Paul was his Gentile name, Saul his Jewish name.

CITIZENSHIP

As to his citizenship Paul was upper-middle class. Though he was born a Jew he was a citizen of Rome, not by payment, not because of reward due to a military campaign but because his family was very prominent. He was also a citizen of the city of Tarsus. He was not a mere *inhabitant*, which would indicate low class, but he was a *citizen*, indicating an upper-class individual. Christianity is for all men regardless of class.

EDUCATION

As to education Paul received an Ivy League education. He sat under the great Gamaliel who was not a mere Rabbi (my teacher) but was a Raban (our teacher). One question after class last week was concerning the term Rabboni which is applied to Jesus Christ twice in the NT (Mark 10:51- Healing of Blind Bartimaeus; John 20:16 – 1st Appearance of Resurrected Christ to Mary Magdalene at the Tomb). The term Rabboni is the Aramaic equivalent to Rabbi, so there is no significant difference in the terms Rabbi and Rabboni, both mean “my teacher”. But Gamaliel was a Raban, and this term is significant for it signified a teacher of the highest order of learning. He was only 1 of 7 to hold that title in the entire history of Pharisaism. He was also a *Doctor of the Law* which meant 2 things; 1) he had special knowledge along the lines of Moses and 2) he could interpret the Torah in

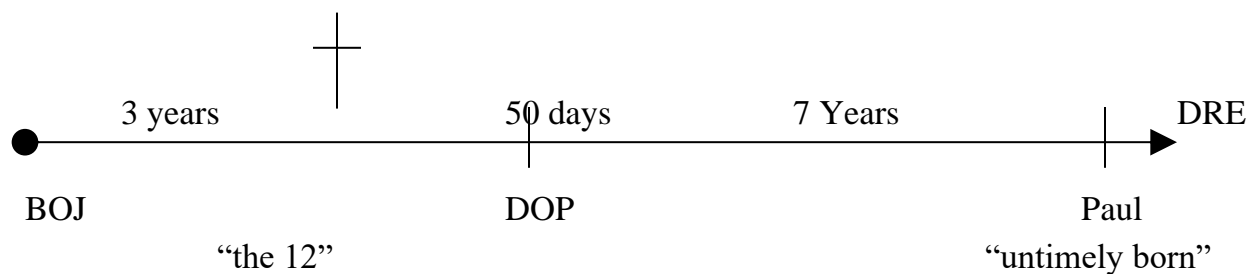
accordance with the Mishnah. The Mishnah was the first section of the Talmud, a commentary on the ancient Scriptures. And Gamaliel could interpret the Torah in accordance with this early commentary. Paul was Gamaliel's #1 student. He excelled beyond all his contemporaries and was zealous for the Law and for God.

WRITINGS AND PRAYER FOR BELIEVERS

Peter thought of Paul as a pure theological genius because his writings are hard to understand (2 Pt. 3:16). However, as we saw in Ephesians, once Paul put doctrine in writing he expected all believers to understand what was written (Eph. 3:18), not on their own, but by the illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit. What does the illuminating ministry of the Spirit consist of? Primarily it consists of the Holy Spirit's ability to remove bias from those possessing a new nature in Christ enabling one to approach the text objectively. If the divine element took primacy in the process of writing Scripture, then it follows that the Holy Spirit's role takes primacy in the believer's interpretation **when and only when** interpreting out of his new nature. Divine illumination may be inerrant, but human illumination is certainly errant. The danger is to equate human illumination with divine illumination.

"AN APOSTLE"

Paul was an "apostle", and an apostle is "a divinely authorized messenger". He held the office of apostle, not the gift of apostleship. The office was authoritative the gift is not authoritative. He was not of the 1st class of apostles, that is the 12 who had been with Jesus from Jesus' baptism by John until the ascension, but he was of the 2nd class of apostles, those who had seen the Lord in his resurrection body (1 Cor. 9:1). Everyone who was a part of the 1st or 2nd class of apostle was commissioned BEFORE the day of PENTECOST and the COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT except Paul.



This is significant in distinguishing between the OFFICE and the GIFT of APOSTLE. The office of apostle was limited to BEFORE the day of PENTECOST. This couldn't be the gift OF APOSTLE because Jesus could not send the Spirit to indwell and give gifts to men BEFORE His Ascension. PAUL however was unique in that he received the apostolic office AFTER PENTECOST. He was the only one appointed to the office of apostle AFTER PENTECOST. This is why he referred to himself in 1 Cor. 15:8 as "one untimely born". It was "untimely" because it was AFTER Pentecost. He therefore qualified because he received direct revelation from the risen Lord which he was commissioned to impart to believers. This is why Paul says in Romans 1 that he had a revelation debt and that the only way to relieve his debt was to reveal all that had been revealed to Him personally from the Lord! NOONE holds the office of apostle today. No one has divine authority as did Paul, the last divinely commissioned apostle.

"OF CHRIST JESUS"

Who commissioned Paul? Christ Jesus. This was a "genitive of possession". The coupling of this genitive of possession with the office of apostle means the Doctrine of the Inspiration of Scripture is in view!

DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION AND INERRANCY

We said 3 things about the Doctrine. *First*, inspiration has a divine and human element. In this case Christ Jesus is the Divine element and Paul is the human element. The divine element is what we call verbal plenary. Verbal means it extends to EACH word. God determined EACH word in the original writings. Plenary means "full" and indicates that the whole of Scripture is God's word, not just a part of Scripture, not just parts that deal with spiritual matters, but everything in the Bible is wholly God's word. The human element is what we call "style". The style was determined by human personality traits. If it were not then the whole Bible would read as one book written by one author. *Second*, inerrancy, means that the *original autographs* were totally without error. Even though we have no original autographs it is important to defend this for 2 reasons; 1) the character of God and 2) attempts to restore the text are futile if not originally inerrant. *Third*, infallibility, means that the Bible is unfailingly accurate to every area of life and every area of life equally. A question was brought up last week in terms of inerrancy. How do we know the Bible is inerrant? I have this to say, *first*, "everyone who has ever been born or ever will be born believes in inerrancy". It's not unique to Christianity. That's right, everyone, whether a Christian or not believes in inerrancy. The question is not whether we have inerrancy or not it's where we locate inerrancy. *Second*, where can inerrancy be located? either 1) human reason or 2) authority. For example, if one doubts or denies the

inerrancy of Scripture then he must have exalted some standard above Scripture in order to judge Scripture according to that standard. Typically, this standard is human reason. Thus, human reason functions as an inerrant standard. If one admits that human reason is not inerrant then it's not a valid standard for judging Scripture. Human reason exalted as the supreme authority and determiner of reality. Human reason exalted as the divine judge. In essence man has made himself God, man is now the final reference point and by the use of legislative logic determines what is true for him. This is, of course, totally arbitrary, philosophically inconsistent, and in addition, it is the essence of sin. Why? Because God is the absolute authority of the universe. His words carry implicit authority. To test God's word is to imply that some absolute authority exists independent of God and such a test is not a neutral test. *Third*, it has been shown extensively that there is no such thing as neutrality (Vern Poythress' WTS argument). No one sits in a vacuum independent of any presuppositions. Everyone has presuppositions. We are not blank slates. This is what Eve tried to do in the garden. She took two propositions (God's and Satan's) and thought that the answer to the question of "whose words are true?" was to be found in an experiment in which **she would determine by her own experience** (eating the fruit).

What we are saying is that our basic presupposition is that the God described in Scripture is an Absolutely Authority. Why the God of Scripture and not some other god(s)? Because only the God of Scripture provides the preconditions for intelligibility. See, every worldview has certain teachings or doctrines and obviously they differ and even overlap occasionally with teachings of other worldviews. But trying to sort out which is true and which is false or which points are true and which are false by comparing them as if on an equal plane sitting under human reason is basically a lesson in futility. It is entirely arbitrary because it presupposes neutrality first of all and no one is neutral. Everyone interprets within their presuppositions and we have to have the right presuppositions or we are going to be wrong every time. But the all-important point is that no other worldviews can account for reality as it truly is. That is, they do not provide the basic preconditions that are necessary to result in intelligibility of the universe. Scripture does. Inherent in the Christian worldview (found in the OT and NT Scriptures) are the basic set of presuppositions which make intelligible the universe that surrounds us. This is what we are saying no other worldview has. In fact, we are actually saying much more, for we also assert that whether you believe Christianity to be true or not you have to operate in the real world as if Christianity were true. That is, you have to assume the presuppositions of Christianity in order to function. You are living off of borrowed capital because your worldview doesn't account for certain aspects of reality. You have to be inconsistent to your worldview at many points just to go about daily life. For example, you have to presuppose stability of categories so that knowledge is even possible. If you don't have stability of categories then

what was a cat yesterday may morph into a peanut tomorrow and the learning process would stop if that happened. In a contingent universe no knowledge is possible (theoretically) at all and all other worldviews basically start with a contingent universe. Such a universe cannot account for stability of categories. This is a major problem for unbelievers. In trying to dodge the knowledge of God they leave the possibility of having any knowledge whatsoever. And further we are not asserting that Christianity is the best choice for a worldview, we are asserting that it is the only choice possible. Unbelievers ought not consider Christianity to be an illogical choice, in fact it is the wholly other way around. Christianity is the most logical choice there is given the world we live in. But, apart from the work of God on their mentality they will never come to this conclusion. This is because they think that the way they think is normal. They think that their thinking processes are basically inerrant. This is of course why the gospel message is foolishness to the unbelieving world and the power of God to the believer.

“BY THE WILL OF GOD”

Paul is an apostle not because of his own will or the will of men but because of the will of God. This is **dia** (*dia*) with the genitive which means “agency”. God is the “agent” responsible for Paul’s apostleship.

2 WILLS OF GOD

Then we looked at the 2 wills of God. God’s general will for all believers and His specific will for your life. Operating outside of either God’s general or specific will gets you out of fellowship. It does not destroy the relationship (loss of salvation) but rather your fellowship, your communion with Him (1 John 1:9).

THE RECIPIENTS

toi/j a`gi,oi/j toi/j ou=sin Îevn VEfe,sw|Ð, “to the saints who are in Ephesus”. The recipients of the letter are called “saints”. The word means “to set apart”. The basic idea is that which is set apart to God or to His service. It does not mean without sin because these “saints” here are latter admonished not to live as those who were not saints (Eph. 4:25-32). The Bible does not teach perfectionism but it does call all believers saints. The reason we are to abstain from living ungodly is because we are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:15-20). The point is that “since we are saints we ought to live as saints”. Or, put another way, live consistent with who you are in Christ. This is positional truth or what I like to call Phase 1 of Salvation (Positional). REVIEW PHASE 1, 2, AND 3. The moment you

believe in the Lord Jesus Christ you are placed in this top circle. You didn't put yourself in the top circle and so you can't take yourself out. We've got a lot of people out there who believe in loss of salvation and that they can commit some sin that's greater than the grace of God. Who do you think you are anyway? That you can commit some sin that's greater than God's grace. I don't care what you do you can never commit some sin that separates you from God in terms of your salvation

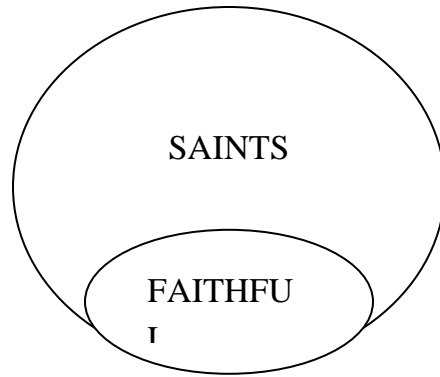
DESTINATION

Îevn VEfe,sw|Ð, "in Ephesus". Textual problem.

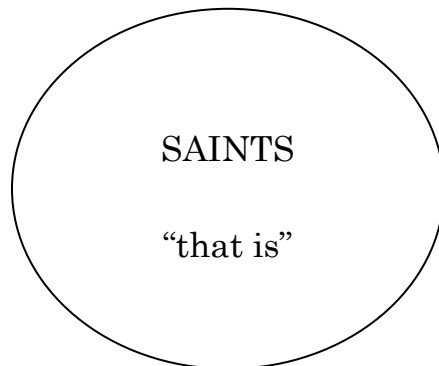
evn VEfe,sw is probably in the original. All supposed problems are easily surmountable (see. P. 140 in Hoehner). Further, the title *PROS EFESIOUS* is in every manuscript including those that omit the phrase evn VEfe,sw in v. 1. Further weakness to the omission is that there is little to no manuscript support in Western, Byzantine, and other sources. It seems limited to the Alexandrian manuscripts which may indicate a scribal error. The attempt to claim it is an encyclical letter by claiming that the original had a lacunae ("gap") for the church to fill in its name as follows toi/j a`gi,ojj toi/j ou=sin _____ kai. pistoi/j evn Cristw/| VIhsou has no manuscript support at all. Further, if no lacunae was there and evn VEfe,sw omitted as many suppose then the reading would be very odd if not impossible, saying "to the saints who are, that is, believers in Christ Jesus". Additionally, if there were a lacunae originally then why not leave the preposition evn so that the church would know where to fill in their name? Again, no manuscripts have the preposition evn by itself. Further, no manuscripts have ever been found that have any city name besides "Ephesus". Though much ink has been wasted on this matter, the conclusion is that the letter is specifically addressed "to the saints in Ephesus", having a general application to all saints. Whether the letter is local or encyclical has no serious bearing on the interpretation of the mighty epistle.

EXPLANATION

kai. pistoi/j evn Cristw/| VIhsou/ ("that is, believers in Christ Jesus." This last phrase is explanatory of "the saints". Lack of the definite article before pistoi/j (*pistois*) makes it hard to translate. Additionally, this construction is unique to Scripture. Paul uses a similar construction in Col. 1:2. Most translations translate kai to be "and" rendering "saints who are in Ephesus and faithful in Christ Jesus" (NAS). This would signify two groups; the "saints" in Ephesus and the "faithful".



But this dichotomy does not have any support from Paul’s other writings. Rather, what is meant is one group with two appellations. Thus, the **kai** is to be taken as epexegetical or explicative, indicating that the two adjectives refer to the same group and should be translated “that is” (also cf. similar construction in Col. 1:2).



In this case the **pistoi/j** (*pistois*) should be translated as “believers” (active) rather than “faithful” (passive). Thus, the **kai** is epexegetical or explanatory of the “saints” and should be translated as “saints who are at Ephesus, that is, believers in Christ Jesus.” It would then indicate that they were not OT saints. Remember we talked about the mighty Apollos who was living 30 years after Christ as an OT saint. He was the guy Priscilla and Aquila found while in Ephesus (Acts 18:24-28). Contrary to Apollos these saints were believers “in Christ Jesus”.

It is unlikely that Paul wanted to distinguish two classes among the Christians, i.e., a “faithful” group from another larger or smaller group that is “holy.” Such a distinction would be unparalleled in the Pauline letters. Even the wild Corinthians are called “sanctified” and “perfect” (1 Cor. 1:2; 2:6). While occasionally Paul presupposes a sharp division between “those outside” and “those inside,” between

“the unbelieving” and “the faithful,” he has no room for half- or three-quarter Christians. It is probable that here the Greek conjunction “and” has the meaning of “namely.” It serves the purpose of explication and may therefore occasionally be omitted in translation if its intent is preserved.ⁱ

Because of the single article **toi/j** before **a`gi,oi,j** the prepositional phrase **evn Cristw/| Vhsou** refers to both the **pistoi/j** and **a`gi,oi,j** and not to the **pistoi/j** only. Thus, it is not that the “believers” are “in Christ Jesus” and the “saints” are not. It is rather that both the “believers” and the “saints” are “in Christ Jesus”. The prepositional phrase **evn Cristw/| Vhsou** is used seven times in Ephesians (1:1; 2:6, 7, 10, 13; 3:6, 21). Here it means “incorporation”, that is, the union of believers to Christ. It does not refer to believing Christ but by believing Christ one is put “in Christ”. Christ is the Greek word **Cristo,j** which comes from the Hebrew word *mashiach* meaning “Messiah” or “anointed one”. “Christ” is not really Jesus’ last name. When the angel told both Joseph and Mary to name their Son, he said to name Him “Jesus” not “Jesus Christ” (Matt. 1:21; Luke 1:31). “Christ” is really a title as Peter emphasized on Pentecost, “God has made Him both Lord and Christ-- this Jesus whom you crucified.” Believers are therefore united with Christ Jesus who provided salvation.

1:2 ca,rij u`mi/n kai. eivrh,nh avpo. qeou/ patro,j h`mw/n kai. kuri,ou Vhsou/ Cristou/, “grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”. Paul uses the exact same greeting in Rom. 1:7; 1 Co. 1:3; 2 Co. 1:2; Gal. 1:3; Eph. 1:2; Phil. 1:2; 2 Thess. 1:2; Phlm. 1:3. The greeting seems to have come from the early church’s introductory liturgy of the worship service. **ca,rij** (*charis*) “grace” is a rich word meaning “God’s unmerited or undeserved favor in providing salvation for sinners through Christ’s sacrificial death”ⁱⁱ. It is “the gospel in one word”. This grace is intended or directed **u`mi/n** (*umin*) “to you”, namely “the saints...that is believers in Christ Jesus” (see notes above). The second greeting word is **eivrh,nh** (*eirany*) meaning “to be bound together” “peace”, it’s Hebrew equivalent *shalom*, it’s opposite **po,lemoj** (*polamos*) meaning “armed conflict” or “war”. Believers united to Christ Jesus were once at war with him, but now they are allied with Him. *The sequence “grace” followed by “peace” is significant because one is the cause of the other. Without exception, in the New Testament, they are always in this order; first grace followed by peace.* Summers says, “Grace is the unmerited favor which God bestows upon man in relationship to the redemptive work of Christ. Peace is the condition which results in the heart of man when grace has done its work...Grace takes care of the problem of sin; peace takes care of the problem of conscience. They stand in proper sequence.” (Summers, *Ephesians: Patterns for Christian Living*, 8.). “Grace” may have had particular significance to Gentile believers since they had been so long without

God while **eivrh,nh** (*eiranay*) “peace” may have had primary significance for Jewish believers (*shalom*). Citing them together Paul is emphasizing unity of Jew and Gentile in the body of Christ, the Church.

avpo. qeou/ patro.j h`mw/n kai. kuri,ou VIhsou/ Cristou, “from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”. The preposition **avpo** (*apo*) signifies the “source” of the “grace” and resultant “peace”. Grace and peace find their “source” in both God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. The 1st person plural pronoun **h`mw/n** (*aymon*) designates that God is not only the Father in relation to the Son, but that He is “our Father”. Paul says believers have the right to call Him “Abba” (Aramaic word) which is similar to our Papa, a very endearing title fit for an intimate relationship. This signifies the personal relationship between God the Father and His children. **kuri,ou** (*kuriou*) comes from the noun **kuroj** (*kuros*) meaning “power” “might”. In Ephesians it is used 26 times, 24 of which refer to Jesus Christ and only 2 of which refer to masters/slaves. Jesus Christ is our Lord, Master, Authority.

DEITY OF CHRIST

Here some people claim that since the Father is called God and the Son is not that the Son is not God. So, here we have to deal with the question of Christ’s deity. Was Christ truly God? Often, it’s said that the Bible nowhere states that Jesus is God. But this is absolutely false. We’re going to look at 4 explicit references that identify Christ as God. First,

Heb. 1:8 is a reference to God the Father referring to His Son as God.

pro.j de. to.n ui`o,n\ o` gro,noj sou o` qeo.j eivj to.n aivw/na tou/ aivw/noj(

to but the Son: the throne of you, O God, into the age of the ages,

The affirmation of Christ’s deity is found in the phrase, “But to the Son [He says], ‘Thy throne, O God,’”. The question arises as to “who says this of the Son?” The clear answer is God the Father says this. The subject is not “throne” as some have suggested, but “God”. The accent of the Hebrew of Ps. 45:7 indicates a pause between “throne” and “God” indicating that they took “God” as direct address. If God the Father refers to the Son as God then I would suggest that we too affirm that the Son is God. Any other view would be denying God’s evaluation of His own Son. That, in essence, would deny God’s attribute of omniscience because it is a claim that God did not know that the Son was less than God. Second,

1 John 5:20, grammatically speaking, has no problems with being understood as teaching the deity of Jesus.

VIhsou/ **C**ristw/|**Å** ou-to,j evstin o` avlhqino.j **qeo.j kai. zwh. aivw,nioj**
G/S/M D/S/M NDP N/S/M 3SPA I Adj N/S/M N/S/M Conj N/S/F Adj
N/S/F

Jesus Christ this is the true God and life eternal

*Some argue that the antecedent of **ou-to,j** is God rather than Christ but this is unlikely. Christ is the nearest antecedent and Christ is called “truth” and “life” elsewhere in John’s writings (John 14:6) so it would not be odd for John to make this statement. Further, the Father is never referred to as “life” and John’s use of the **ou-to,j** never refers to the Father.*

The final phrase of this verse is self-explanatory. Jesus is the true God!

CHRISTOLOGICALLY SIGNIFICANT GRANVILLE SHARP RULE TEXTS

Granville Sharp was an English philanthropist and abolitionist (1735-1813). He is known as the “the Abraham Lincoln of England” because of his role in the abolition of slavery there. He was not trained theologically, but he was a student of the Scriptures. He had a strong belief in the deity of Christ and therefore studied in the original languages to better defend that belief. In the course of his studies, he noticed a repetitive pattern (article – substantive – *kai* – substantive; TSKS). His rule is often misunderstood or abused so it is necessary to state the rule. Sharp actually published 6 rules on the use of the article but the first rule is the one of interest because it has significance in two texts dealing with the deity of Christ.

When the copulative *kai* connects two singular nouns of the same case, if the article *o*, or any of its cases, precedes the first of the said nouns or participles, and is not repeated before the second noun our participle, the latter always relates to the same person that is expressed or described by the first noun or participle: i.e. It denotes a farther description of the first named person... (Sharp, *Remarks on the Uses of the Definitive Article*, 3)

2 such examples related to the deity of Christ qualify in New Testament texts.

Titus 2:13 qualifies Sharp’s rule and is Christologically significant for it is an explicit reference to Christ Jesus as God.

<i>Art</i>		<i>Noun 1</i>		<i>Noun 2</i>		<i>Person</i>
<i>tou/ mega,lou</i>		<i>qeou/</i>	<i>kai.</i>	<i>swth/roj</i>	<i>h`mw/n</i>	<i>V</i> Ihsou/ <i>C</i> ristou/(
<i>G/S/M Adj</i>	<i>G/S/M</i>	<i>G/S/M</i>	<i>Conj</i>	<i>G/S/M</i>	<i>1PPP G/P</i>	<i>G/S/M</i>
<i>of the great God</i>			<i>and</i>	<i>Savior</i>		<i>of us, Jesus Christ</i>

Thus, the nouns God and Savior both refer to Jesus Christ. This is an undeniable proof of the deity of Christ.

2 Peter 1:1 is a second text which qualifies under Sharp's rule and also affirms the deity of Christ.

Art	Noun 1		Noun 2	Person
tou/	qeou/	h`mw/n	kai.	Vhsou/ Cristou/
G/S/MG/S/M	1PPP G/P	Conj	G/S/M	G/S/M
of the God	of us	and	Savior,	Jesus Christ

Some have argued that the breaks the unity of God and Savior as referring to the same person. The problem with this is that identical Greek constructions are used on non-Christologically significant passages in the same book (e.g., 1:11; 2:20; 3:18). No one denies the validity in those texts. Why refuse to apply the same rule in 2 Pt. 1:11; 2:20; and 3:18? Further, more than half of the NT texts that fit Sharp's rule have some intervening word between the two substantives (nouns).

In summary, the prologue of this epistle covers three things: (1)the authorship of Paul who is an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God; (2) the identification of the recipients who are the saints in Ephesus, also called believers, who have been united to Christ Jesus; and (3) the expression of greetings summarizing the author's desire that the recipients appreciate and appropriate the grace that brought salvation and its resulting peace, both of which come from God their Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (Hoehner, 152), *both of whom are very God of God* (italic section is my addition).

ⁱ Wallace, Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics, 282.

ⁱⁱ Hoehner, Ephesians, 149.

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