

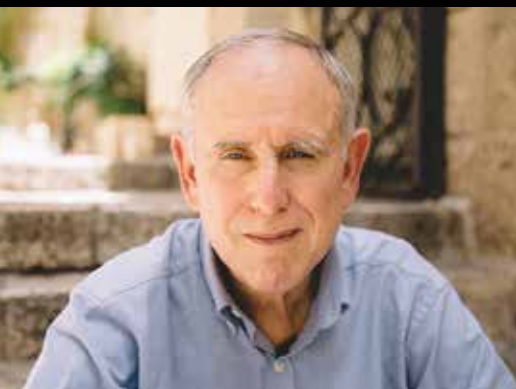
THE CHOSEN PEOPLE



Volume XXVII, Issue 10
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IS THERE HOPE FOR THE MIDDLE EAST?

THE STORY OF HANUKKAH | MICAH'S RESPONSE TO JUDGMENT



FROM THE PRESIDENT, DR. MITCH GLASER

Shalom in His grace!

Happy Thanksgiving on behalf of the entire Chosen People Ministries global family! I hope you will be able to enjoy a delicious Thanksgiving meal with your loved ones! If you lost a friend or family member during the last year or two, I also pray the Lord will fill your heart with heavenly comfort and peace.

I am very thankful to God for you and the ways you have stood with Your Mission to the Jewish People this year. Your prayers and support mean so much to us!

We have so much to be grateful for in spite of the circumstances, as our staff continues to reach Jewish people with the gospel both in person and online.

Our outreach has even increased this past year as *so many Jewish people are looking heavenward for answers.*

Our work among elderly Holocaust survivors in Israel has increased as the need has been overwhelming. Chosen People Ministries—Israel has provided love and company for the lonely, food for the hungry, and of course, the good news of Jesus to these precious Jewish souls. Many young Israelis also attend our online ministry events when we cannot meet in person. We need your prayers as we resume in-person outreaches in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and throughout this country of almost seven million Jewish people.

In New York City, we recently commemorated the twentieth anniversary of 9/11 by honoring our heroes and reminding Americans of our unbreakable bond with Israel in combating terrorism. More than 40,000 people joined us for the event online and in person.

We thank God for all He has done in our 127th year of faithful ministry, and we are looking forward to the greater things He will do through you and our global staff in our 128th year (John 14:12). We are focusing on reaching Israelis in Israel and wherever they travel after the army with the gospel, expanding our outreach through videos, podcasts, and social media, and preparing our next generation for leadership in Jewish ministry through our Brooklyn-based and now online Charles L. Feinberg seminary program!

We have so much to be grateful for in Jesus, our Messiah. As the Apostle Paul wrote, *“In everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus”* (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

The Story of Hanukkah

I also wish you an early Happy Hanukkah, which is one of my favorite holidays. Growing up in a Jewish home in New York City, I loved each day of this eight-day festival because my parents gave us presents every night as we lit the beautiful Hanukkah candles.

We also eat wonderful foods like potato pancakes (called latkes) smothered in applesauce or sour cream. In Israel, delicious jelly donuts are also a Hanukkah staple. OK... so it is not the healthiest of Jewish holidays! We make our Hanukkah foods with lots of oil as both oil and light illustrate two of the great themes of the holiday.

Let me explain.

The story of Hanukkah takes place during the biblical “silent years”—the 400 years between the Old and New Testaments. In 168 BC, the Jewish people rebelled against the Syrian-Greek General, Antiochus the Fourth, whom the Jewish people called “Antiochus the Madman.” This evil Seleucid king took the name “Epiphanes,” which means “God manifest,” as he believed he was the manifestation of one of the Greek gods. Antiochus wanted the Jewish people to worship him rather than the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which was at the heart of the reason for Israel’s resistance.

A priestly family called the Maccabees led the rebellion. They lived in a town called Modi’in, which is just a few miles from Jerusalem. As the story goes, the representative of Antiochus entered the village and demanded that the Jewish people in Modi’in bow down and worship a statue of Antiochus, upon pain of death. In doing so, they would affirm belief in the gods of the Greeks, loyalty to the madman, and rejection of the God of the Hebrews.

This godly family waged guerrilla warfare against the mighty Greek-Syrian army and managed to defeat Antiochus. This victory was a miracle as once again, Israel beat the odds and defeated a much larger and more powerful enemy. Jewish people traditionally view this as God’s blessing



upon the Maccabees for their faithfulness to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

After their victory, they traveled to the Holy City of Jerusalem to rededicate the Temple. The victorious band of priestly guerrillas was horrified as they entered the Temple.

They discovered that Antiochus had sacrificed a pig on the altar, signaling the Syrian Greeks' contempt for the Jewish people. The Maccabees tore down the stones of the altar as it was deemed beyond cleansing. According to Jewish tradition found in the books of Maccabees (1 Macc 4:36–59; 2 Macc 10:1–8), the Maccabees set the defiled altar stones aside until “a prophet” comes, who would tell them what to do with the stones (1 Macc 4:45–46).

Then, according to tradition, they discovered the eternal light in the Temple had only enough oil to last for one day. So they immediately began to make fresh olive oil to keep the eternal light from being extinguished. According to tradition, even though it usually takes eight days to complete and cure the oil, the one day's worth of oil miraculously lasted for eight!

We do not know whether the story is true or not. However, I was raised in a very traditional Jewish home and taught to believe it was true! Either way, the victory of Hanukkah is one of the great stories of both Jewish heroism and God's loyalty to His chosen people. For these reasons and more, the Jewish people celebrate Hanukkah.

The festival is far more than an opportunity to enjoy the beauty of family gatherings, Hanukkah parties, or even giving presents. The holiday is more than a wonderful time of playing games with our families, like spinning little tops called *dreidels* and singing some of the most moving songs within our Jewish tradition.

Jesus & Hanukkah

My wife and children love the holiday as it beautifully connects to our Messiah Jesus in so many ways.

After all, Yeshua, Jesus, is the **Jewish** Messiah. He is the Light of the world (John 8:12), so there is nothing like the lights of the Hanukkah candles to remind us that Jesus the Messiah is the true light that illuminates mankind.

But there is more! Hanukkah is recorded as observed by the Jewish people in the New

Testament—not in the Old! John wrote that Jesus celebrated the *Feast of Dedication*, a title that commemorates the rededication of the Temple after the desecration by Antiochus Epiphanes.

In John 10:22–30, we read:

*At that time the Feast of the Dedication took place at Jerusalem; it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon. The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, “How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Messiah, tell us plainly.” Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me. “But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. “My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. **I and the Father are one.**”*

In the midst of this moment of intense and heated debate with the Jewish leaders of the day, Jesus makes one of the most remarkable declarations about His person found in the entire Bible.

He is not only the light of the world, but He is God in the flesh!

This message of His incarnation, light, and the deliverance He offers humanity through His death and resurrection is the message we hope to bring to every Jewish soul.

So please pray for Your Mission to the Jewish People—that the Lord will fill us with His Spirit, enabling us to continue our ministry to the Jewish people in Israel, the United States, and throughout the world.

The Future of the Middle East

I am also grateful for the Abraham Accords and other movements bringing peace and hope to a new and changing Middle East! But even more, I look forward to the reshaping of the Middle East when Jesus returns to reign as King!

I know you will appreciate the following study of the events leading up to His glorious return and that this teaching will fill you with hope for the future.

We are grateful for your faithful partnership. Have a Jesus-centered and joyful Thanksgiving and a Happy Hanukkah!

Your brother in the Messiah,



Mitch



The Future of the Middle East According to Scripture



The article is adapted from Dr. Michael Rydelnik's presentation at our recent **9/11 and the New Middle East** conference. Dr. Rydelnik leads the Jewish Studies department at Moody Bible Institute, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year.

On September 15, 2020, we celebrated the signing of the Abraham Accords, which reflect a normalization of relations between Israel and the Gulf States of the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. Sudan followed on September 26, 2020, and Morocco in December 2020. Thus, there have already been many economic, social, cultural, and political steps forward between Israel and her neighbors, for which we rejoice!

One of the most significant reasons for normalization is the common concern of the Gulf States regarding Iran becoming a nuclear and potentially dominant power. In addition, the threat of ISIS, instability in Syria and Iraq, and the rise of the Taliban are also important pieces of the puzzle. As a result, the nations normalizing ties want peace with Israel in order to improve economic and political relations, but also for defense reasons, as Israel has the most powerful military in the Middle East.

Yet, despite the frail and even self-serving reasons for this growing peace among Israel's neighbors, we have a greater sense of hope for peace and prosperity between Israel and her Middle East neighbors today. But will this turn into a more enduring peace? I do not think so, as these agreements are unlikely to bring the Shiites or Muslim radicals into this unity.

So, how then should Bible believers view the future through the lens of Scripture?

Peace in the Middle East According to Scripture

Bible prophecy envisions peace in the region in two stages. First, there will be a false peace engineered by a false messiah. Then we will see an even greater and enduring peace between

nations created by the true Messiah, and this peace will endure forever!

As followers of the Messiah and students of the Word of God, we should expect a false peace to come before the true and lasting peace. In 1 Thessalonians 5:1–3, the Apostle Paul detailed the events of what he called the “day of the Lord.” He wrote about a future time when everyone is saying, “Peace and safety,” and then sudden destruction comes.

Most world leaders will accept a false peace treaty, described in Daniel 9:27, which the activities of a future false messiah will bring about. This false messiah will be so politically influential and powerful, so militarily strong that he will guarantee this peace agreement. Then, after a few years, he will break that treaty himself, and Israel's temporarily peaceful neighbors will turn and make war against the Jewish people.

The prophet Ezekiel predicted this conflict:

Thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I am against you, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal. I will turn you about and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out, and all your army, horses and horsemen, all of them splendidly attired, a great company with buckler and shield, all of them wielding swords; Persia, Ethiopia and Put with them, all of them with shield and helmet; Gomer with all its troops; Beth-togarmah from the remote parts of the north with all its troops—many peoples with you.” (Ezek 38:3–6)

While Togarmah is Eastern Turkey, the other nations listed are all Islamic states of the former Soviet Union, the “-stan” states. Persia is Iran, Cush is Sudan, and Put is Libya. All these nations are currently Islamic states, and they are going to invade the land of Israel. In that coming day, these are the nations who are going to break the peace.

The prophet Daniel describes that time when the false messiah will set up his tent—his military headquarters—between the Mediterranean Sea and Jerusalem (Dan 11:45). There, he will gather his forces. They will march down to Jerusalem from Mount Megiddo—Armageddon—and gather all nations against Jerusalem to destroy the Jewish people once and for all. These events take place before Israel spiritually returns to the Lord. If you look carefully at Ezekiel 39:22, the prophet predicted that the outcome of this war would lead Israel to come to know the Lord Jesus as their Redeemer (Ezekiel 39:25–28; Zechariah 12:10; Romans 11:25–31).

The True Peace Established

But that is not the end of the story! God will allow Israel to come to the end of their rope militarily as the Gentile nations are on the verge of destroying Israel. According to Scripture, it is then that the Jewish people will finally turn to and call out for her Messiah.

The prophet Zechariah looked forward to when they will look upon the one who is pierced and mourn as one mourns for an only son (Zech 12:10). This prophecy is a clear prediction of Israel's end-times repentance and turning to Jesus the Messiah, which becomes the precursor for the second coming of Jesus and the destruction of Israel's enemies, leading to true and lasting peace. As the prophet wrote,

And in that day I will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn. (Zech 12:9–11)

This turning and mourning of the Jewish people trigger the victory of Messiah and His people at Armageddon and bring about the true Messiah's peace.

The Apostle John affirmed the conclusion to the evil career of the false messiah in the Book of Revelation:

And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. (Rev 19:19–20)

John described the Messiah's final victory at Armageddon—when He delivers Israel from this final attack—a war truly to end all wars.

At last, the true Messiah establishes His Messianic kingdom of peace. Isaiah penned a moving description of the real and lasting peace established by the true Messiah:

“And He will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; and they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war” (Isa 2:4).

Thus, even though we see hopeful signs of peace now, the Bible teaches that the Middle East, which seems so promising at the moment, will get a whole lot worse before it ultimately gets better. However, once it gets better, **it will be better than we could ever imagine!**

Our Response to God's Word

Now, the question becomes, “What do we do today?” Here are three suggestions:

First, we must pray for peace instead of simply waiting for that kingdom of peace to come. Psalm 122:6 says, “*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.*” When we pray for the peace of Jerusalem, we are praying for every person who lives there—Jewish, Arab, Palestinian, Israeli, or Christian.

Second, we **need to work for peace**. Jesus said, “*Blessed are the peacemakers*” (Matthew 5:9). Rather than praying peace to come through a military intervention in the Middle East, we should pray that God Himself will bring a measure of peace so that the gospel can go forth. We need to be doing all we can to work for that peace—all we can to help the peace process. It may not be the final peace, but there can be temporary peace, at least in parts.

Finally, the best thing we can do is to **proclaim the Prince of Peace**. We need to get the message of Isaiah 52:7 out: “*How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace and brings good news of happiness, who announces salvation, and says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’*”

We need to bring the good news of Messiah to the nations, including both Muslims and the Jewish people. The only hope of turning people's hearts against war, terrorism, and fear is for individuals to accept Yeshua the Messiah. Only He can permanently reconcile us to Him and one another. Only He can bring peace where we all need it most—our hearts.

We are grateful for the Abraham Accords, as even a moment's peace is worth the trouble! Every day a Jewish person or Arab does not die in a war or a terrorist attack is precious. Yet, we are People of the Book and want to see life and our future through the lens of Scripture. We know that a day is coming when the Messiah will return! He is our true blessed hope, and we look forward to that glorious day when the Prince of Peace will reign over all the earth!

Micah: Micah's Response to Judgment

The remainder of Micah chapter one records the prophet's response to coming judgment. Beginning in 1:8, Micah said that, in light of God's coming judgment upon Israel, he felt obligated to "lament and wail." This lamenting and wailing would be expressed by going "barefoot and naked," a sign of intense, extreme mourning. Though Micah was pronouncing God's judgment on Israel, he nevertheless loved his people and felt deep pain for what was in store for them. He describes his mourning as being like the sounds of nocturnal animals known for their wailing noises.

Micah saw the punishment of Israel as inevitable and due to her sin sickness. His contemporary, Isaiah, wrote about Israel, "Where will you be stricken again, as you continue in your rebellion? The whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head there is nothing sound in it, only bruises, welts and raw wounds" (Isa 1:5-6). Israel had a deep wound from which she could not recover, namely, a wound of punishment caused by her sin sickness. This judgment of God would reach the very heart of Judah all the way to Jerusalem. Ultimately, this took place when Sennacherib's Assyrian army destroyed forty-six towns in Judah and then surrounded Jerusalem in 701 BC.

In Micah 1:10-16, the prophet described the utter desolation that God's judgment would bring on the people of Judah. Selecting towns that virtually encircled his own hometown of Moresheth-Gath, Micah used the meaning of the different places to describe the devastation that would happen. He began first by saying in 1:10, "Tell it not in Gath, weep not at all." Echoing the words of David in 2 Samuel 1:20, Micah exhorted the people not to give encouragement to the enemy by letting them know what was happening. Then he said, "At Beth-le-aphrah roll yourself in the dust." Beth-le-aphrah means "house of dust."¹ The inhabitants should express their distress there by rolling in the dust.

He then told the inhabitants of Shaphir, which means "beautiful,"² to "go on your way...in shameful nakedness" (v. 11). To the inhabitants of Zaanan, a town whose name sounds like the Hebrew word translated "to come out," he told them they would "not escape." The inhabitants of Beth-ezel ("house of the leader"³) would lament because the Lord would "take

from you its support." The people of Maroth, which sounds like the Hebrew word translated "bitterness," would become "weak" as they waited for relief that would not come. Their expectation would result in bitterness because God would send "calamity...to the gates of Jerusalem."

Then, in 1:13, Micah sarcastically urges the people of Lachish, a town known for its horses, "Harness the chariot to the team of horses," essentially as a means to escape from the enemy. The problem is that they would not be able to escape, however, because Lachish had led Jerusalem—as horses lead a chariot—into the sin of idolatry. "She was the beginning of sin to the daughter of Zion—because in you were found the rebellious acts of Israel" (v. 13).

The remainder of this section is a description of how helpless Israel would be against the invading forces. Micah's hometown, Moresheth-Gath, would be taken captive, and the royal family would have to flee in terror to Adullam in order to escape, just as David had to do. Ultimately, the people are told to mourn over the loss of their children by shaving their heads: "Make yourself bald and cut off your hair, because of the children of your delight" (v. 16). This section began with an echo of David's lament over the death of King Saul and ends with the name of the cave in which David hid from that same king. Though not specifically mentioned, King David plays an important part in Micah's lament.



The Flight of the Prisoners by Jacques Joseph Tissot.
c. 1896-1902, Jewish Museum, New York, NY



Rich Freeman, DMin, serves as the vice president for Church Ministries and Conferences with Chosen People Ministries and lives in South Florida with his wife, Julia.

1 John D. Barry et al., eds., "Beth-Le-Aphrah," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

2 James Strong, *A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and the Hebrew Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2009), 120.

3 Chad Brand et al., eds., "Beth-Ezel," in *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 192.

MINISTRY NEWS BRIEFS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

CHUTZPAH AT A CHURCH MEETING LEADS TO A DIVINE APPOINTMENT

Recently, one of our staff members was speaking at a church meeting, along with Moshe,* an Israeli. After looking over Moshe's website, our staff member realized that a non-discerning person would think that Moshe was a believer in Jesus, which wasn't the case. Our staff member prayed that the Lord would give him an opportunity to share with him. Moshe gave a very engaging talk at the church meeting and when someone asked him about the Messiah, he responded with, "I love Jesus! I read Jesus!" You would think that with a response like that, that he would be a believer, but this was not the case. After everybody left, Moshe, the pastor, and our staff member remained and asked Moshe, "So how do you speak about Jesus, and yet you don't believe in him?" Moshe seemed surprised at the question and told our staff member that he didn't believe in Jesus now, but he would at His second coming. After fifteen minutes of spirited debate, where the pastor's head darted back and forth as if he were following a tennis match, our staff member finally asked Moshe directly, "If you say you will believe in Him when he comes the second time, why don't you simply say, 'I believe in Jesus' now?" To that, Moshe responded, "I don't believe that the Messiah is God." Our staff member explained that the Lord showed up several times in the Old Testament in bodily form—walking with Adam and Eve, appearing to Abraham, wrestling with Jacob, and stepping foot on the Mount of Olives in Zechariah. The words flowed out of our staff member's mouth as if the Lord Himself placed them there. We believe that the Almighty did! Moshe had never heard this argument for the deity of the Messiah before and was stunned. Praise God for this divine appointment and please continue to pray with us for Moshe's salvation.

INTRODUCING TAI TAPU IN NEW ZEALAND

It is common knowledge that young people everywhere are still enamored with mystical approaches to spirituality. Jewish people remain the largest identifiable people group dabbling dangerously in New Age philosophies. On the positive side, this statistic shows that Jewish people are hungry for spiritual truth...they are just looking in all the wrong places! This past year, the Lord generously provided yet another outreach center located seaside in one of the most beautiful parts of New Zealand's South Island, the West Coast. The ministry that takes place there will focus on discipleship. We are also building a prayer chapel next to the hostel, which overlooks the magnificent Tasman Sea, where we will invite Israelis and other backpackers to experience a holy encounter with God's Word! The West Coast of New Zealand has many groups that meet to practice forms of meditation that expose people to demonic influences. Participants are encouraged to "disconnect" and empty their minds as they journey toward nirvana, but on the shores of the Tasman we will offer "Tai Tapu" (Maori for "holy wave"), in which minds will be cleansed and filled with the cleansing water of God's Word. For those seeking "spiritual" experiences, we will offer Bible-centered meditation, leading to the gospel of salvation.



*names changed

Chosen People Ministries is looking to hire a **Publications Manager** to assist the Director of Publications in the writing, managing, editing, production, and mailing of all publications—whether the material is produced electronically, on paper, or on the Internet. This position reports to the Director of Publications and all schedules and projects require Director of Publications approval. Common tasks include:

- Writing articles and emails as assigned
- Copy editing for Publications and Digital Media
- Preparing material for publication on the Chosen People Ministries website
- Assisting in developing and managing timelines for each project
- Prioritizing projects to ensure all deadlines are met
- Assisting in research and writing projects required by the Executive Office.
- Building and maintaining relationships with external writers and editors as needed
- Attending regular meetings necessary to accomplish the above

Please send your resume and cover letter to nsurasky@chosenpeople.com.

Qualifications and Education Requirements

The ideal candidate will possess the following qualifications:

- A proven ability to research, write, and produce articles, etc. within deadlines
- Minimum two years of experience in writing for publication, online communications, or has held a position requiring comparable experience and skills
- Minimum two years of experience in Jewish ministry or has held a position requiring comparable similar experience and skill
- Has substantial understanding of the Jewish ministry landscape
- Should be a self-starter, quick learner; able to work independently and meet deadlines
- Must be in significant agreement with the Chosen People Ministries Statement of Faith
- An accredited degree in theology, Jewish studies, journalism, writing, or a related field is helpful
- Within commuting distance from Manhattan

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Publications Manager

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Now is the time to strategically plan your year-end giving, so your generosity can go even farther: you can maximize your impact and get a great tax advantage, too. In fact, because of the CARES Act . . .

1. The CARES Act allows for an additional "above-the-line" deduction for charitable gifts made in cash of up to \$300, or \$600 for married couples filing jointly. If you are not itemizing on your 2021 taxes, you can claim this deduction.
2. You can give more than ever before by taking a charitable deduction (up to 100%) for cash donations against your 2021 adjusted gross income for federal tax purposes.

To be sure you make the biggest impact (and get the best tax savings), you will want to consider these additional ways to maximize your year-end giving:

- **IRA Distribution.** If you are 70½ or older, you can transfer up to \$100,000 to a qualified charity—like Chosen People Ministries—with no tax penalties, without adding a single penny to your taxable income, and with a greater tax savings than if you simply itemized it. If you are age 72 or older, this also counts toward your required minimum distribution.
- **Appreciated stocks or property.** Donate appreciated stock or assets you have held for more than a year and you: receive a tax deduction for the value of the assets (up to 30% of your adjusted gross income), likely save on capital gains tax, and thus have more to give.
- **Cash gift.** Any generous donation you give—when dated and postmarked or given online by midnight December 31—may apply toward this year's taxes.

Contact Cindy Forbes at 212-223-2252,
ext. 1208 or cforbes@chosenpeople.com today!

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