

Celebrating HIS First Coming

Remembering what the Prophets said... Pt. 8

Luke 3:1 KJV

1 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene,

Luke 3:1 AMPC

1 In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar's reign—when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene

“Fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar”: When the Roman Senate declared Augustus emperor, they did so on condition that his power would end with his death, rather than passing to his heirs.

The idea was that the senate, rather than the emperor himself, was to choose the next heir to the throne themselves. However, the emperor himself was to choose the heir to the throne. Augustus circumvented that difficulty by appointing a co-regent, on whom he planned gradually to confer the imperial powers.

When he outlived his first choice for successor, Augustus next selected his son-in-law, Tiberius, whom he adopted and made his heir in A.D. 4 (Augustus disliked Tiberius but hoped to pass power to his grandsons through him). Tiberius was made co-regent in A.D. 11, and then automatically became sole ruler at the death of Augustus on Aug. 19, A.D. 14.

Note: If Luke's chronology is dated from Tiberius' appointment to the co-regency, the 15th year would be A.D. 25 or 26. If Luke was calculating from the death of Augustus, this date would fall between Aug. 19, A.D. 28 and Aug. 18, A.D. 29.

One other fact complicates the setting of a precise date: the Jews calculated a ruler's term from the Jewish New Year following accession. So, if Luke was using the Jewish system, the actual dates could be slightly later. The earlier date of A.D. 25-26 seems to fit the chronology of Christ's life best.

“Pontius Pilate ... Herod ... Philip”: Pontius Pilate was the fifth governor of Judea. Herod Antipas is the main Herod in the gospel accounts. He was the one who had John the Baptist put to death (14:1-12), and examined Christ on the eve of the crucifixion (Luke 23:1-12). It seems this son of Herod was a murderer and probably, as bad as or worse than his father.

Luke 3:2 KJV

2 Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

Luke 3:2 AMP

2 In the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the Word of God [[a]concerning the attainment through Christ of salvation in the kingdom of God] came to John son of Zachariah in the wilderness (desert).

“Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests”: According to Josephus, Annas served as High-Priest A.D. 6-15, when he was deposed by Roman officials.

He retained defacto power, as seen in the fact that his successors included 5 of his sons and Caiaphas, a son-in-law. Caiaphas was the actual High-Priest during the time Luke describes, but Annas still controlled the office. This is seen clearly in the fact that Christ was taken to Annas first after His arrest, and then He was taken to Caiaphas. These above two scriptures are just setting the time that the things that happen in chapter 3 occur.

Tiberius Caesar was the second Roman emperor. Pontius Pilate was the governor of Judaea and was subordinate to Caesar. Herod was subordinate to Pontius Pilate and was over the small area of Galilee where John the Baptist and Jesus lived. Annas and Caiaphas were the head of the temple worship.

We can see the chain of world power in this area here. This "John", mentioned here, was John the Baptist. This Word of God that John received was from God, although it will affect these rulers indirectly: but the message is not for them as rulers. The message John gets speaks to the soul of man.

Luke 3:3 KJV

3 And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;

Luke 3:3 AMPC

3 And he went into all the country round about the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance ([a]of hearty amending of their ways, with abhorrence of past wrongdoing) unto the forgiveness of sin.

“Baptism of repentance”: The symbolism of John’s baptism likely had its roots in Old Testament rituals (Lev. 15:13). **Baptism had also long been administered to Gentile proselytes coming into Judaism. The baptism of John was/is powerfully and dramatically symbolized repentance.**

Note: At the time of Christ, Gentiles could be baptized into Judaism through the established practice of proselyte baptism (immersion in a *mikveh* or ritual bath) as part of the conversion process, often alongside circumcision. While Jesus' followers later adapted baptism for a new covenant in Christ, John the Baptist's ministry itself used water baptism as a unique call for both Jews (who needed repentance for sins and a separation from religion) and Gentiles to enter God's coming kingdom, foreshadowing Christian baptism. This was a public admission of repenting from their old way of living and thinking, admitting by proclamation in word and deed this new life is what they have chosen.

Proselyte defined: A new convert to some religion or religious sect, or to some particular opinion, system or party. Thus a Gentile converted to Judaism is a proselyte; a pagan converted to Christianity is a proselyte; The word primarily refers to converts to some religious creed.

Jews accepting John's baptism were admitting they had been as Gentiles and needed to become the people of God genuinely, inwardly (an amazing admission, given their hatred of Gentiles).

The people were repenting in anticipation of the Messiah's arrival...The meaning of John's baptism differs somewhat from modern day Christian baptism (Acts 18:25).

Acts 18 AMP

1 After this [Paul] departed from Athens and went to Corinth.

2 There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, recently arrived from Italy with Priscilla his wife, due to the fact that Claudius had issued an edict that all the Jews were to leave Rome. And [Paul] went to see them,

3 And because he was of the same occupation, he stayed with them; and they worked [together], for they were tentmakers by trade.

4 But he discoursed and argued in the synagogue every Sabbath and won over [both] Jews and Greeks.

5 By the time Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was completely engrossed with preaching, earnestly arguing and testifying to the Jews that Jesus [is] the Christ.

6 But since they kept opposing and abusing and reviling him, he shook out his clothing [against them] and said to them, Your blood be upon your [own] heads! I am innocent [of it]. From now on I will go to the Gentiles (the heathen).

7 He then left there and went to the house of a man named Titus Justus, who worshiped God and whose house was next door to the synagogue.

8 But Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed [that Jesus is the Messiah and acknowledged Him with joyful trust as Savior and Lord], together with his entire household; and many of the Corinthians who listened [to Paul also] believed and were baptized.

9 And one night the Lord said to Paul in a vision, Have no fear, but speak and do not keep silent;

10 For I am with you, and no man shall assault you to harm you, for I have many people in this city.

11 So he settled down among them for a year and six months, teaching the Word of God [concerning the [a]attainment through Christ of eternal salvation in the kingdom of God].

12 But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia (most of Greece), the Jews unitedly made an attack upon Paul and brought him before the judge's seat,

13 Declaring, This fellow is advising and inducing and inciting people to worship God in violation of the [b]Law [of Rome and of Moses].

14 But when Paul was about to open his mouth to reply, Gallio said to the Jews, If it were a matter of some misdemeanor or villainy, O Jews, I should have cause to bear with you and listen;

15 But since it is merely a question [of doctrine] about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves; I decline to be a judge of such matters and I have no intention of trying such cases.

16 And he drove them away from the judgment seat.

17 Then they [the Greeks] all seized Sosthenes, the leader of the synagogue, and beat him right in front of the judgment seat. But Gallio paid no attention to any of this.

18 Afterward Paul remained many days longer, and then told the brethren farewell and sailed for Syria; and he was accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. At Cenchreae he [[c]Paul] cut his hair, for he had made a vow.

19 Then they arrived in Ephesus, and [Paul] left the others there; but he himself entered the synagogue and discoursed and argued with the Jews.

20 When they asked him to remain for a longer time, he would not consent;

21 But when he was leaving them he said, I will return to you if God is willing, and he set sail from Ephesus.

22 When he landed at Caesarea, he went up and saluted the church [at Jerusalem], and then went down to Antioch.

23 After staying there some time, he left and went from place to place in an orderly journey through the territory of Galatia and Phrygia, establishing the disciples and imparting new strength to them.

24 Meanwhile, there was a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, who came to Ephesus. He was a cultured and eloquent man, well versed and mighty in the Scriptures.

25 He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and burning with spiritual zeal, he spoke and taught diligently and accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he was acquainted only with the baptism of John.

26 He began to speak freely (fearlessly and boldly) in the synagogue; but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him with them and expounded to him the way of God more definitely and accurately.

27 And when [Apollos] wished to cross to Achaia (most of Greece), the brethren wrote to the disciples there, urging and encouraging them to accept and welcome him heartily. When he arrived, he proved a great help to those who through grace (God's unmerited favor and mercy) had believed (adhered to, trusted in, and relied on Christ as Lord and Savior).

28 For with great power he refuted the Jews in public [discussions], showing and proving by the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ (the Messiah).

The difference in the baptism John was preaching vs the modern Christian baptism is that christianity, for the most part, has altered the significance of the ritual, symbolizing the believer's identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection only. (Romans 6:3; Col 2:12). John had one message, "repent".

That should be the message of our day also, to repent is the first step on the way to being saved. Then when we repent, we must change our mind and become a new creature in Christ. Our thoughts must be different. We must walk a different walk than before. Our desires must change.

Most modern day christianity speaks of following Christ and not repenting and pursuing the truth about what is sin... admitting, realizing their old way of living can no longer be part of this new way of life - I am a new person!!!!

What John the Baptist was saying is turn from your wicked ways and live a holy life pleasing unto God. This can only be found by the preaching, teaching and studying of the Word.

John 1:1 AMPC

1 In the beginning [before all time] was the Word ([a]Christ), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God [b]Himself.

John 14:6 AMPC

6 Jesus said to him, I am the Way and the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father except by (through) Me.

John 5:22-23 AMPC

22 Even the Father judges no one, for He has given all judgment (the last judgment and the whole business of judging) entirely into the hands of the Son,

23 So that all men may give honor (reverence, homage) to the Son just as they give honor to the Father. [In fact] whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, Who has sent Him.

John 14:6 AMPC

6 Jesus said to him, I am the Way and the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father except by (through) Me.

2 Corinthians 5:17 AMPC

17 Therefore if any person is [ingrafted] in Christ (the Messiah) he is a new creation (a new creature altogether); the old [previous moral and spiritual condition] has passed away. Behold, the fresh and new has come!

Galatians 2:20 AMPC

20 I have been crucified with Christ [in Him I have shared His crucifixion]; it is no longer I who live, but Christ (the Messiah) lives in me; and the life I now live in the body I live by faith in (by adherence to and reliance on and complete trust in) the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

John had been chosen even before his birth for this job. He had lived a ***near perfect life*** and was well respected by those around him. This message that John had received from God was very similar to the great commission which says, "***Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.***" (Mark 16:15).

Luke 3:4 KJV

4 *As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet,* saying, *The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.*

Luke 3:4 AMPC

4 *As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet,* *The voice of one crying in the wilderness [shouting in the desert]: Prepare the way of the Lord, make His beaten paths straight.*

You can find the Scripture in Isaiah (in chapter 40:3).

Isaiah 40:3-5 AMPC

3 *A voice of one who cries: Prepare in the wilderness the way of the Lord [clear away the obstacles]; make straight and smooth in the desert a highway for our God!*

4 *Every valley shall be lifted and filled up, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked and uneven shall be made straight and level, and the rough places a plain.*

5 *And the glory (majesty and splendor) of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.*

6 *A voice says, Cry [prophesy]! And I said, What shall I cry? [The voice answered, Proclaim:] All flesh is as frail as grass, and all that makes it attractive [its kindness, its goodwill, its mercy from God, its glory and comeliness, however good] is transitory, like the flower of the field.*

John the Baptist was not speaking in the temple, he was out in a desert area or wilderness where few lived. John was preparing the people to be ready for the Savior by proclaiming the coming of the Lord.

Luke 3:5 KJV

5 *Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth;*

Luke 3:5 AMP

5 *Every valley and ravine shall be filled up, and every mountain and hill shall be leveled; and the crooked places shall be made straight, and the rough roads shall be made smooth;*

This is speaking of obstacles of every kind which shall be done away with so that everyone will be able to hear.

Luke 3:6 KJV

6 *And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.*

Luke 3:6 AMPC

6 And all mankind shall see (behold and [a]understand and at last acknowledge) the salvation of God (the deliverance from eternal death [b]decreed by God).

“All flesh”: Gentiles as well as Jews. All 4 gospels quote (Isaiah 40:3; i.e. Matt. 3:3; Mark 1:3; John 1:23). Salvation is not just for one particular group; salvation is for everyone who will accept it. Salvation is an offer of God to all mankind, a way out or a way of escape from the promised judgement.

Matthew’s account

Now, we are going to pick up the story in the book of Mathew... the same period of time, the story of John the Baptist told through words of Matthew.

Matthew’s account

Matthew 3:1 KJV

1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

Matthew 3:1 AMPC

1 In those days there appeared John the Baptist, preaching in the Wilderness (Desert) of Judea

The forerunner of Christ was “John the Baptist.” He was the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth, and a cousin of the Lord (Luke 1:5-80). His birth was accompanied by the promise **“He shall be great in the sight of the Lord ... and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost”** (Luke 1:15).

Jesus said of him that there was none “***greater than John***” (Matt. 11:11), during the Old Testament dispensation. This would imply that John the Baptist was the very epitome of the message of the Old Testament itself.

Matthew’s reference to John the Baptist assumes that his readers were familiar with him. John is presented as the prophet sent in the spirit of Elijah “***before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord***” (Mal. 4:5).

His appearance and his dynamic preaching certainly depict him in the life-style of Israel’s ancient prophet. Jesus would later say of him, “***I say unto you, that Elijah is come already***” (Matt. 17:12). The name “John” means the Lord is gracious. What a wonderful name for someone who would proclaim the arrival of the King of Grace (Jesus the Christ). The rest of his name, the Baptist, just meant that he was the baptizer.

Israelites had practiced a form of baptism for years but John also, was teaching a different way - that Jesus or following the Word and not religion was the way, the truth and the life! (John (14:6))

He was not in the temple, but wherever there were people and water to baptize those people in. That was where he preached. He preached mostly in an area near Jericho and near the Jordan River. This “wilderness” did not mean an area heavily wooded, or like the jungles. It just meant it was out of the populated areas. It, also, meant that he was out where the ordinary people were.

The region was to the immediate West of the Dead Sea, an utterly barren desert. John seems to have preached near the northern end of this region, close by where the Jordan flows into the Dead Sea (verse 6). This was a full day's journey from Jerusalem and seems an odd location to announce the arrival of a king. But it is perfectly in keeping with God's ways (1 Cor. 1:26-29).

Matthew 3:2 KJV

2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Matthew 3:2 AMPC

2 And saying, Repent (to]think differently; change your mind, regretting your sins and changing your conduct), for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

His message was a simple one. Repent. Today that message is needed as the first step toward becoming a Christian. Repent means a change of mind resulting in a change of conduct as the follower of Christ learns about sin, judgment, righteousness and the “things” to come.

Repentance is not merely sorrow. It involves a complete change of attitude regarding God and sin and is often accompanied by a sense of sorrow and a corresponding change in conduct. Such repentance does not arise within man himself, but is the result of God's mercy in leading man to it (Acts 5:31; Rom. 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:25).

Thus repentance involves the very process of conversion whereby men are born again. John's message of repentance was necessary in order to prepare people for the "kingdom of heaven" which was "at hand".

John's next statement fits our day just as well as the day in which John was preaching. Truly the kingdom of heaven is at hand. In one sense the kingdom is a present reality, but in its fullest sense it awaits a yet-future fulfillment. There have been preachers ever since John bringing this same message and God never changes, and neither does His message.

Matthew 3:3 KJV

3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

Matthew 3:3 AMPC

3 This is he who was mentioned by the prophet Isaiah when he said, The voice of one crying in the wilderness (shouting in the desert), Prepare the road for the Lord, make His highways straight (level, [a]direct).

“Spoken of by the prophet Isaiah”: I broke this reference to Isaiah on page 10 and 11 of your notes as cited in Luke 3:4.

Matthew 3:4 KJV

4 And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

Matthew 3:4 AMPC

4 This same John's garments were made of camel's hair, and he wore a leather girdle about his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey.

Verse 4 brings a message of the simple life John lived, he didn't dress like the rest of the "in crowd" or try and copy modern day religion. He concern was not about religious trends, verbiage, or culture... he spoke the whole TRUTH and didn't remove repentance and what it meant but it was at the forefront of what he preached. There is no saving without repentance.

"His raiment of camel's hair": Far from comfortable or fashionable, John evokes the image of Elijah (2 Kings 1:8), and the Israelites were expecting Elijah before the Day of the Lord (Malachi 4:5).

Matthew 3:5 KJV

5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan

Matthew 3:5 AMPC

5 Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the country round about the Jordan went out to him;

His clothes weren't trendy, no production, no lights, he did not withhold speaking the whole truth about sin, judgment and righteousness. What many in the church see/feel today as boring, too judgmental, too deep, too long, teaching, judging, fire and brimstone when the whole Bible is Preached... John's unfiltered message of what it meant to lay down your own life for Christ was an exciting one, and a remnant group of people from all the surrounding areas came to hear this man speak.

Paul instructed the New Testament church to preach and teach the same as John the Baptist.

2 Timothy 4:1-5 AMPC

1 I charge [you] in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, Who is to judge the living and the dead, and by (in the light of) His coming and His kingdom:

2 Herald and preach the Word! Keep your sense of urgency [stand by, be at hand and ready], whether the opportunity seems to be favorable or unfavorable. [Whether it is convenient or inconvenient, whether it is welcome or unwelcome, you as preacher of the Word are to show people in what way their lives are wrong.] And convince them, rebuking and correcting, warning and urging and encouraging them, being unflagging and inexhaustible in patience and teaching.

3 For the time is coming when [people] will not tolerate (endure) sound and wholesome instruction, but, having ears itching [for something pleasing and gratifying], they will gather to themselves one teacher after another to a considerable number, chosen to satisfy their own liking and to foster the errors they hold,

4 And will turn aside from hearing the truth and wander off into myths and man-made fictions.

5 As for you, be calm and cool and steady, accept and suffer unflinchingly every hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fully perform all the duties of your ministry.

Paul was not just instructing pastors, preachers and teachers what to do but encouraging them why and their attitude they would display.

Romans 1:16-18 AMPC

16 For I am not ashamed of the Gospel (good news) of Christ, for it is God's power working unto salvation [for deliverance from eternal death] to everyone who believes with a personal trust and a confident surrender and firm reliance, to the Jew first and also to the Greek,

17 For in the Gospel a righteousness which God ascribes is revealed, both springing from faith and leading to faith [disclosed through the way of faith that arouses to more faith]. As it is written, The man who through faith is just and upright shall live and shall live by faith.

18 For God's [holy] wrath and indignation are revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who in their wickedness repress and hinder the truth and make it inoperative.

Note: _____

Matthew 3:6 KJV

6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

Matthew 3:6 AMPC

6 And they were baptized in the Jordan by him, confessing their sins.

“Baptized”: See page 4 of your notes as it relates to Luke 3:3. We will see later on in this scripture, that this was a different type of baptism. After Jesus, baptism became a symbol of death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. When you go under the water, it symbolizes being buried with Him; and when you come out of the water, it symbolizes rising from the grave with Him.

Matthew 3:7 KJV

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

Matthew 3:7 AMPC

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee and escape from the wrath and indignation [of God against disobedience] that is coming?

The Pharisees and Sadducees were hung up in tradition. The Pharisees were what we would call the people of the middle class today. The Sadducees were from the upper class, and some from high-priest families. Religion was everything to them.

In general, Pharisees were considered middle class, composed of merchants, craftsmen, and lay leaders, while Sadducees were the wealthy, aristocratic upper class, holding power in the priesthood and the Sanhedrin, making this a largely accurate distinction. The Pharisees (religious leaders) connected with common people through their emphasis on the Law and oral traditions, whereas the Sadducees (religious leaders), focused on temple worship and Roman stability, represented the elite.

Jesus' interaction with the Pharisees was usually adversarial. He rebuked them for using human tradition to nullify Scripture. When John called them "generation of vipers", he really was revealing their hidden sins. They were Self-proclaimed experts. He knew their personality and knew that from these particular groups would come much opposition to Jesus.

The Sadducees were known for their denial of things supernatural. They denied the resurrection of the dead (22:23), and the existence of angels (Acts 23:8).

They tended to be wealthy, aristocratic members of the priestly tribe, and in the days of Herod their sect controlled the temple, though they were fewer in number than the Pharisees.

- O Pharisees and Sadducees had little in common.
- O Pharisees were ritualists; Sadducees were rationalists.
- O Pharisees were legalists; Sadducees were liberals.
- O Pharisees were separatists;
Sadducees were compromisers and political opportunists.

But they united together to oppose Christ (22:15-6, 23-24, 35). John publicly addressed them as deadly snakes.

“The wrath to come”: John’s preaching echoed the familiar Old Testament theme of promised wrath in the Day of the Lord (Ezek. 7:19; Zep. 1:18). This must have been a particularly stinging rebuke to the Jewish leaders, who imagined that divine wrath was reserved only for non-Jews.

Matthew 3:8 KJV

8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

Matthew 3:8 AMPC

8 Bring forth fruit that is consistent with repentance [let your lives prove your change of heart];

Repentance itself is not a work, but works are its inevitable fruit. Repentance and faith are tied together in Scripture and unable to be separate from each other. Repentance means turning from one’s sin, and faith is turning to God (1 Thess. 1:9).

1 Thessalonians 1:9 AMPC

9 For they themselves volunteer testimony concerning us, telling what an entrance we had among you, and how you turned to God from [your] idols to serve a God Who is alive and true and genuine,

They are like opposite sides of the same coin. That is why both are linked to conversion (Mark 1:15; Acts 3:19-21). Note that the works John demanded to see were “fruit” of repentance. But repentance itself is no more a “work” than faith is.

Mark 1:15 AMP

15 And saying, The [appointed period of] time is fulfilled (completed), and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ([a]have a change of mind which issues in regret for past sins and in change of conduct for the better) and believe (trust in, rely on, and adhere to) the good news (the Gospel).

Acts 3:19-21 AMPC

19 So repent (change your mind and purpose); turn around and return [to God], that your sins may be erased (blotted out, wiped clean), that times of refreshing (of recovering from the effects of heat, of [a]reviving with fresh air) may come from the presence of the Lord;

20 And that He may send [to you] the Christ (the Messiah), Who before was designated and appointed for you—even Jesus,

21 Whom heaven must receive [and retain] until the time for the complete restoration of all that God spoke by the mouth of all His holy prophets for ages past [from the most ancient time in the memory of man].



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