# Favorite Chapters - Hebrews 1

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us.!

So I think it's a challenging way to preach, but it's in a good way to help us get a bigger picture. Not necessarily the whole book, but just kind of covering more than a few verses.
So I look forward to being with you tonight as we trek through Hebrews chapter 1. Is this worth it? That's a question that can bring a lot of wisdom before you do something stupid. It can bring some perspective in the midst of trouble and difficulty. A couple of years ago, I was on vacation with my wife and her family in Colorado during the summer.
And one of my brothers-in-law and I got the idea to go mountain biking one day. We thought we were tough stuff. And went down the mountain, and at the bottom of the mountain, there's a massive jump.
[1:18] It's optional. You don't have to go off of it. So we didn't go off the jump the first time down. And I said, I think I'm going to take that jump next time down. And my brother-in-law said, you won't. And so, by law, I had to, on the next time down, take the jump.

And so I just sinned it. I was going full speed. Never taking a jump like this in my life. And just go sideways off the ramp. I'm flying through the air. Land hard. Then have to limp home, because of course we didn't drive.
As the adrenaline was wearing off, and it got more painful. But a question I never asked was, is this worth it? The answer was no. It was not worth it. Do I regret it?
Also no. But asking, is this worth it, would have brought me some perspective. If I had landed properly, it would have been to a witness of one to tell the story.
It wouldn't have been worth anything. And I crashed horribly, but I'm okay now. I lived. Is this worth it? It's a question that sometimes isn't asked prospectively, but in the midst of suffering, in the midst of difficulty.
[2:24] Is it worth the headache? Is it worth the pain to continue walking in this course? And that's a question the recipients of this letter were asking.

Is following Jesus worth it? It was written to Jewish Christians, and it seems they were teetering on the edge of continuing to follow Jesus or going back to the Judaism they knew so well.
Why would they have to make a choice like that? Well, Christianity was persecuted. Judaism was not. If they followed Jesus, they would be outlaws, essentially.
They'd be cut off from their families by following Jesus. There's much more safety in Judaism. Is Jesus worth it?
Or to phrase it another way, is Jesus worthy of this? And it seems that's the question the recipients of this letter are asking, and it seems to be the question the author is trying to answer.
[3:32] He's trying to show them the worth and excellence and supremacy of Jesus over everything. Jesus is superior. And throughout this book, he shows he's greater than angels.

He's greater than Moses. He's greater than Joshua. He's greater than the Old Testament. He's the fulfillment of the Old Testament. He's greater than the Old Covenant. He's greater than the priests. He's greater than our sin. Jesus is greater in every single way.
Jesus is greater than everything these people have known. Jesus is the fulfillment of everything these people have believed. And they would ultimately lose nothing compared to what they would gain in following Christ, even if they lose their lives.
Jesus is the better mediator of a better covenant that's founded on better promises, and it's inaugurated by a better sacrifice.

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What would they return to? Jesus is so much better. Jesus is superior in every way. And with us being in Mustang, Oklahoma, I doubt that you're tempted to return back to your Jewish roots, but you are tempted to return back to your life of sin.
[4:48] You're tempted to go back to old habits you feel comfortable in. You're tempted to return to the sin that Jesus saved you from because it's so tempting and tantalizing to our flesh.

And maybe, after all, following Jesus isn't glamorous like maybe you thought it would be. Maybe your life has actually become much harder trying to be faithful to Jesus than it was beforehand.
Or maybe you're here tonight, and you're on the outside of Christianity asking, is Jesus worth my time? But what good is there in following Jesus?
And the author of Hebrews' answer to that question is that following Jesus is better than life itself. Following Jesus is true life itself, even if it leads to the loss of life in an earthly sense.
And so this book, this chapter, exalts Christ. And as we'll see on the back half of this chapter, the author assumes or knows that his congregation understands the Old Testament very well.
[5:57] He expects them to pick up on these references that he's laying down and these quotes from the Old Testament. He quotes the Old Testament a lot, seven times here in chapter one.

And so one thing the book of Hebrews does is it teaches us how to read the Old Testament. It doesn't just quote the Old Testament, it quotes it in a way that is Christ-centered and Christ-oriented.
And so it's very helpful in our even approach to the Old Testament itself. And while the book of Hebrews gives us incredible theology about Christ, incredible just views and majestic beliefs about Christ, it gives us almost no information about the author himself.
And I think that's very fitting because the author's goal is to exalt Christ, make Christ known. And this book is really a sermon put to writing.
At the very end, chapter 13, verse 22, he says, you've borne with my word of exhortation. This seems to be sermonic in nature, even from the very introduction.
[7:03] It's not an epistolary greeting. He just launches into this deep, deep theology about Christ. So tonight we'll cover chapter one in two points, God's final word and God's faithful son.

God's final word and God's faithful son. Let me read verses one through four. Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets.
But in these last days, he has spoken to us by his son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature.
And he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.
So point number one, we see God's final word in verses one through four. And these opening phrases set the tone for the rest of the letter.
[8:15] They lay the groundwork for how the author will argue what the gospel is and why Christ is superior to everything. He explains and gives his view of God's redemptive plan that spans from creation to new creation.

And Christ is at the center of all of it. Christ is the one who created. Christ is the one who will consummate. Christ is the one who sustains. We'll see all of that in the first four verses.
And the Christ who does these things is the Christ who died and rose. As we see in verse one, long ago, at many times, and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets.
And it's just worth noting that God has not been inactive throughout history. He's been speaking all along the way.
The gospel is good news, but the gospel is not the first news that's been delivered by God to his people. He has been speaking all throughout history.
[9:17] And he describes his speech as at many times and in many ways. And the speech he's speaking of here is that which was delivered through the prophets.

You think of how the prophets received their message, how the prophets relayed their message. It was various times and various ways. There were dreams, visions, angels, parables, dramas, voices from heaven, fire, clouds, lightning, et cetera.
And this is how God delivered the Old Testament through the prophets. And this was God speaking. And the Old Testament was and continues to be the word of God, yet at the same time,

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there's something more that was needed.
The Old Testament itself is a story without a conclusion. The Old Testament is beautiful and important and true, but it is not the complete revelation of God.
The prophets indeed spoke the word of God, but the word they spoke was not the final word. One of the most significant things you can know about the God of the Bible is he is a God who speaks.
[10:27] He is a God who reveals himself through his word. This is a gracious thing. Because if he were not to reveal himself, we'd have no way of knowing him savingly.

If he did not speak, we would be left in the darkness of our own ignorance and sin. And the fact that God speaks actually sets Christianity apart from most world religions.
In so many religions, it is us trying to find our way toward God or the gods. It's us trying to find our destiny, us trying to find our purpose, us trying to appease the gods who are angry.
According to the Bible, Christianity is God bursting onto the scene and telling us what he is like and saving us through his word made flesh.
The gospel is the conclusion to these promises that he first made through the prophets. But he contrasts that time that was long ago with these last days in verse two.
[11:34] But in these last days, he has spoken to us by his son. So the author here is contrasting two different periods of time, the long ago time, and the last days time.

And the phrase last days in the New Testament can be a reference to the ultimate, final days of the tribulation when Christ returns. But more broadly, it's descriptive of the church age.
All the time from when Christ is ascended and seated at the right hand of his father to the time that he returns to the earth is classified as the last days.
And so the author is contrasting the long ago days with these last days. And he's also contrasting the prophets with his son. The gospel that he has spoken through his son is the long-awaited conclusion to the story that began in the Old Testament.
And it's the conclusion that fulfills promises, shines light on the shadows, and ultimately sets us free from sin. And he draws a distinction between the prophets and his son.
[12:47] God is no longer speaking to us through prophets as he has done in the past. And the message that he spoke through the prophets still speaks to us today, but he's no longer speaking through prophets any longer because he has spoken through his son.

And notice the finality the author speaks with. He has spoken to us, past tense, by his son.
It's because of verses like Hebrews 1-2 that we should not expect new words from God. We should not expect new revelation from God.
Does the spirit still work today? Absolutely. But what is his work to help us understand the word that he has spoken through his son, to guide us into the truth that he has revealed in his son?
The son is the fullest revelation of the father. He shares in the father's nature being himself the son of God. And now if we just pause and ask ourselves the question, Hebrews was written just before 70 A.D., likely, and so there were still books to be written in the New Testament.
[14:09] And so how is it that the author of Hebrews can say he has spoken through his son finally if there was still more of the New Testament to be written? And why wouldn't there just be four Gospels talking about what Christ said with his own lips if it's through Christ that he has finally spoken?

But if we just step back and look at what the nature of the New Testament is, it's about Christ. The New Testament itself is the word of Christ.
In the Gospels, Christ is described and pictured. In the epistles, he is explained and applied. In Revelation, he's exalted and worshiped.
In the New Testament, Jesus is everything. Jesus is greater than everything. And so it is this word about his son, this word through his son, that is God's final and fullest revelation of himself.
And ultimately, what the apostles are doing are just unpacking the truth of what Jesus has done, of who he is. They're just explaining the significance of him to us.
[15:23] And the author of Hebrews, as he describes who this son is, gives us seven descriptions of Christ. Seven descriptions of Christ here in verses two through four.

He first describes him as the heir of all things, whom he appointed the heir of all things. He receives everything.
He's the executor of his father's estate. If you want to do business with the father, it must be conducted through the son. He is the way and the truth and the life and no one comes to the father

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except through the heir, except through Christ.
And he's next described as the creator, through whom also he, that is the father, created the world. Jesus is the one through whom God created all things. And you think of other passages like John 1, all things were made through him and without him was not anything made that was made.
[16:34] But you read back in Genesis 1, when God created the world, how is it that he created? It was through his word. And that's where John 1 ultimately goes.

It was through the word made flesh that all things were created. And the author of Hebrews agrees that the father created all things through his son.
And in the Bible, that word create is only attributed to God. This is a God activity. No one else has the power to do this.
And the New Testament just freely describes Christ in that way, just freely gives him this power to create all things, to create the universe from nothing. And so we see the God who creates is the God who redeems.
And so we need to be careful, students of the doctrine of creation. We need to read those accounts carefully because if we misstep there, that is closely connected to our doctrine of redemption as well.
[17:36] The God who creates is the God who redeems, and both of those things are done and accomplished through Christ. Christ is not only the final word, he is the originator of life itself.

He's the beginning and the end. And thirdly, he's described as the radiance of the glory of God in verse three. He is the radiance of the glory of God.
And we need to notice, it doesn't say that he reflects the glory of God. He's not made in the image of the glory of God. He radiates it.
He is its source. And you think of the Old Testament when the glory of God shows up. It's brilliant and shining light. You think of the burning bush or Mount Sinai or the pillar of fire in the wilderness or the tabernacle in the temple where there's fire on the altar and clouds and thick darkness to cover the light of his glory.
And Christ shines the glory of God. He shares in this divine nature with the Father and it's into this dark world that God has sent his everlasting light, his glorious light.
[18:56] And apart from the Son of God, apart from this Son, there is only darkness. And the Apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4, just as he who said, let there be light in the beginning has shed abroad his light in our hearts.

And so he creates light in our darkened souls at salvation. Fourthly, says also, and the exact imprint of his nature.
The exact imprint of his nature. This language almost describes a money press that just makes identical coins, identical bills.
Christ is the exact representation of the Father's nature. To the extent that Jesus can say, whoever has seen me has seen the Father in John 14, 9.
To the extent that John can say in John 1, 18, no one has seen God, but the only God who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.
[20:06] He reveals the Father because he shares in that same nature with the Father. He's the exact imprint of his nature.

And then I see in Creed describes him this way. He is God from God, light from light, true God from true God.
And there's a shift here in the middle of verse 3 from who he is to what he does. From his person to his work.
It says that he upholds the universe by the word of his power. The Son not only created the universe, but he currently sustains it.
He not only has the power to create, but the power to control and the power to bring everything to an end at the end of time. His power is limitless.
[21:08] It says he upholds the universe by the word of his power. And what's fascinating as we think about Christ is there's never been a point in time where he has stopped doing this.

There's never been a point in time where he has stopped sustaining the universe by the word of his power. That may seem like an obvious statement, but when we think about the incarnation in particular, this becomes wildly fascinating.

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Even as a baby boy who could not speak a word, he was sustaining the universe by his word. While he was daily dependent on milk to survive, he was simultaneously giving life to all things.
And how does the universe continue to exist today? Sunday school answer, Jesus. And no one can thwart him.
No one can topple his authority. Jesus is the sustainer of all things. And it says, after making purification for sins.
[22:21] It's a very priestly description of the son. And the author will spell this out later in chapters 7, 8, and 9. But for purification to take place, blood had to be shed.

And so Hebrews 9.22 says, apart from the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins. And he just kind of says, oh, yeah, by the way, like that thing the Jews have been striving for all the time, the thing they can't ever arrive at is purification for sins.
Daily priests are having to offer sacrifices. Yeah, after Jesus did that, he took a seat. And it's so easy for us to pass by these phrases and familiarity, but this is a monumental accomplishment.
He just does it. He makes purification for sins through his death. And it's through his shed blood that we have a right to be heirs with him of all things.
We have a right to approach the heavenly father even in prayer. And then the seventh description he gives is that he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high.
[23:29] He's exalted and enthroned at the father's right hand. And why is he able to sit down? Because his work is done. And in the Old Testament, priests were never seated.

There was no such thing as a seated priest. There's all kinds of furniture in the tabernacle and in the temple. There are no chairs. Thinking about a seated priest would be thinking about, would be like thinking about a seated referee in football today.
It's like a good ref shouldn't be sitting down. He needs to be able to see things. Maybe some of them should sit down. They'd be better. But in order to be a good referee, it requires you to be on your feet. And similarly, the priests had to constantly be on their feet if they were to be faithful.
But this priest is seated because he's offered a once for all sacrifice and it is finished. But where he is seated is just as important at the right hand of the majesty on high.
No one belongs here. Who has the right to sit down next to the father? Only someone who shares in his nature. Only someone who is like him.
[24:39] In verse four, having become as much superior to angels as the name he's inherited is more excellent than theirs. And we'll have to wait till verse five to get the answer to this question.

What's the name that he inherited? Well, the name he inherited is son. But if we just stop here and ask the question, who then is this? Who is this that can accomplish all of these things?
Who is this who's worthy of these descriptions? This is God himself that's being described and yet, he's become man. The son here is given glory and honor that belongs to God himself.
If you just think through the ground we've covered in the first four verses, he's the son of God. He's the revelation of God. He's the fulfillment of the Old Testament. He's the heir of all things. He's the creator of all things.
He's the radiance of God's glory, the expression of his nature. He's the sustainer of creation, the purifier and mediator for God's people. This chapter is not light.
[25:51] Jesus is superior to everything and that is God's final word. Secondly, we see God's faithful son. God's faithful son.

And we now come to a section where he's going to argue that Jesus is superior to the angels. And for us, from our perspective, that seems like a very obvious statement to make.
It doesn't seem like it should take up half of a chapter, more than half of a chapter. But if you look at intertestamental literature, so between the Old and New Testaments, the Jews were obsessed with angels.
They were obsessed with guardian angels, they were obsessed with angelic visitations and angelic revelations. And so it was necessary for this author to say, you need to be more focused on Jesus than on angels.
And he explains why by quoting seven Old Testament passages. And he doesn't just quote them, but he supplies some Holy Spirit-inspired interpretation of them.
[26:59] And so he's guiding us in how we should read the Old Testament. But in these seven quotations, he quotes from all three major sections of the Old Testament. The Jews broke up the Old Testament into three major sections, the law, the prophets, and the writings.

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And the author of Hebrews will draw from all three of them to show that Christ is superior. So let me read verses 5 through 14 for us. For to which of the angels did God ever say, you are my son, today I have begotten you?
Or again, I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son. And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, let all God's angels worship him.
Of the angels, he says, he makes his angels winds and his ministers a flame of fire, but of the son, he says, your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.
You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore, God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions. And, excuse me, and you, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning and the heavens are the work of your hands.
[28:16] They will perish, but you remain. They will all wear out like a garment, like a robe, you will roll them up like a garment, they will be changed, but you are the same and your years will have no end.

And to which of the angels has he ever said, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet? Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?
So at the end of verse four, he says, the son has inherited a name. What is the name that the son has inherited? And based on what he says in verse five, the name that the son has inherited is son. How is that the case? He's been the son of God for all eternity. How did he receive in time the name son? Well, the son of God became the son of man.
And it was through his entrance into the flesh, through his entrance into humanity that he became son in a new facet. He became the son of man, which was Jesus' favorite title to describe himself.
[29:40] But the author draws from two Old Testament passages here. First one is Psalm 2-7. You are my son. Today, I have begotten you.

Psalm 2 is a messianic psalm describing the rule and reign of Christ. And here, he's receiving the name of son. Or again, I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son.
It's a quote from 2 Samuel 7 where God is speaking to David of his descendant who will rule on the throne forever and ever. And so Jesus is greater than the angels because no individual angel is called son of God.
The angels collectively are referred to as the sons of God but Jesus alone is worthy of the singular title son of God. He has not said that to any of the angels.
And in verse 6, and again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, let all God's angels worship him. This is a quote from Deuteronomy 32.
[30:54] And in the original context, this is a reference to Yahweh himself. Yahweh himself is worthy of the angels' worship and here, the author of Hebrews is saying, the father commands the angels to worship the son.

The angels worship Christ. Christ does not serve the angels. The angels are the ones who declared the birth of Christ. Jesus does not declare the ministry of angels.
The angels are servants of God but the son is God. Angels surround the throne of God but the son sits on that throne. So what does he say of the angels?
Verse 7, he makes his angels winds and his ministers a flame of fire. This is a quote from Psalm 104. And you think through the Old Testament, he makes his angels winds and his ministers a flame of fire.
The Jews believe that the Old Testament law was delivered by God to Moses through the ministry of the angels. And so you see on Mount Sinai thick darkness and clouds and lightning and wind and fire and verses like Psalm, like they're in Psalm 104 contribute to that belief.
[32:09] He makes his angels winds and his ministers a flame of fire. But of the son he says, your throne oh God is forever and ever.

And then in verse 9 it says, therefore God your God has anointed you. This is a quote from Psalm 45 and it is earth shattering.
As you just begin to read this psalm it seems like the psalmist is just saying your throne oh God speaking to Yahweh generally is forever and ever. But the God that he addresses he then says your God has anointed you.

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And so the author of Hebrews is saying this is a prophecy about Christ. This is about the Christ who would come his rule and his reign are marked by righteousness and a hatred for wickedness.
This is the father speaking of his son. In verses 10 through 12 he quotes Psalm 102. Again the author of Hebrews is saying the father is speaking to the son and saying you Lord laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning and the heavens are the work of your hands.
[33:29] They will perish but you remain. They will all wear out like a garment like a robe you will roll them up like a garment they will be changed. And so just like we throw a dirty t-shirt on the floor Christ is going to do that with the universe.

Once it is over once it has served its purpose Christ will change it. Christ will make all things new and at the end of verse 12 but you are the same and your years will have no end.
And in chapter 13 verse 8 he will say Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.
And then his final question and final quote in verse 13 to which of the angels has he ever said sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.
A quote from Psalm 110 verse 1 this again is a divine privilege. You must share a nature with the almighty God to sit at his right hand.
And then verse 14 are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation? The angels are sent to serve but the son sits.
[34:59] angels are creations of God but Jesus is the creator. The angels have amazing power and incredible privilege that we could only dream of in this life but they are not divine.

They are sent to serve not to be served. Jesus is superior to the angels in every way. They are glorious creatures but they pale in comparison to the glory of the creator Jesus himself.
And in conclusion why does this matter? Why is this important? And we'll dip into chapter 2 just briefly.
The author brings this argument to its conclusion therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we've heard that's the gospel lest we drift away from it.
And here's his reasoning. For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?
[36:12] And so his point is the law was delivered through the ministry of angels and if that law proved to be faithful if that law proved to be trustworthy and that every sin that that law marked out was punished how much more obedience how much more faithfulness do you think God expects from a word spoken through his son?

If the word spoken through angels was reliable and God took it seriously how much more liable are we to God to obey a word spoken through his son who is worthy of far more honor and glory than the angels ever will be?
we must listen to him and the author of Hebrews has launched us into worship he gave us seven descriptions of Christ he shows us that Christ is superior to angels by quoting seven Old Testament passages from all three major divisions of the Old Testament God the Father is mentioned by name or by title seven times references to God speaking show up seven times in this chapter Jesus is the complete fulfillment of all of God's promises Jesus is better than our made up rules or made up religions Jesus is better than angels Jesus is better than our sin Jesus is better than any suffering we will encounter Jesus is better than our life Jesus is better than anything Jesus is superior to everything will we worship him or will we play with our sin and how will you escape if you neglect such a great salvation and the author of
Hebrews doesn't flatter them he doesn't say yeah just just try to keep quiet and you can avoid suffering he recognizes they will suffer he recognizes they are suffering he recognizes their suffering will get worse through time being faithful to Jesus will bring suffering and strain and exhaustion and possibly death but one day there will be rest there's a verse in a modern hymn called Christ is mine forevermore it says mine are tears in times of sorrow darkness not yet understood through the valley I must travel where I see no earthly good but mine is peace that flows from heaven and the strength in times of need
I know my pain will not be wasted Christ completes his work in me and Samuel Rutherford was a Presbyterian minister in the 1600s he had this to say about suffering he said when I am in the cellar of affliction I've learned to look for God's choicest wines and we're Baptists so we look for the grape juice but his point stands the Lord's sweetest comforts to his people come through suffering and the author of Hebrews loves his people too much to try to lead them to avoid that suffering he says you

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will suffer but Christ is worthy of it do not fall away stay faithful keep walking and 1st
[40:11] Peter 5 10 and 11 says after you've suffered a little while the God of grace who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ will himself strengthen and confirm and restore and establish you to him be dominion forever and ever amen let me pray for us our father we thank you for your son the one through whom you've spoken to us fully and finally I pray we would not neglect him by searching for another word from you but that we would faithfully submit ourselves to the message you've declared through him it is in him we find the satisfaction of your wrath the fulfillment of your promises and the joy that we will find nowhere else so I pray we would cling to him and not neglect the great message of this salvation let us learn from Hebrews 1 that your son who became son is superior to everything and everyone and may we worship him and give him the glory that he is due and it's in his name we pray amen thank you for being here tonight you're dismissed we'll see you Wednesday we'll see you tamale what's going on not being here what's going on what's going on not being here what's going on not being here what's going on not being here what's going on not being here what's going on not being here what's going on not being here what's going on not being here what's going on not being here what's going on not being here what's going on not being here what's going on not being here what's going on not being here what's going on not being here what's going on not being here what's going on not being here what's going on not being here what's going on not being here what's going on fathers

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