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**Testing:  
School for Angels  
(Part 2)**

**526-A  
Series: Testing**

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# Testing: School for Angels

## (Part 2)

We have been looking at the reasons that God tests His children. In the last lesson we started on the tenth reason. The tenth reason that God tests His children is to minister to angels. As we conclude the two part series on angels, our study has six parts.

### THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF ANGELS

The first is to study the nature and character of angels. They are created beings. They were present at the creation of the world as we read in Job. They are spirit beings with spirit bodies. They often inhabit physical bodies for particular purpose to glorify God. They are greater in knowledge than we are, but they are not omniscient. They are stronger than we are, but they are not omnipotent. They can travel at faster speeds than we can comprehend. Their very appearance strikes awe in the hearts of men. They radiate the glory of God. Whenever they appear as angels and not as men, they are dressed in white signifying the purity of God. At least some of them have wings, perhaps all of them do, we don't know. We do know that they don't marry and they don't die. Their relationship between the church and Israel has changed. We know that they have ministered to Israel. We saw these ways in the last lesson. They also ministered to Jesus during His stay on earth in many different ways.

### ANGELS ARE MINISTERS TO GOD

We found that there are four examples set for us by angels in how they minister to God.

1- They are perfect messengers. The word angel means messenger. A messenger is one who delivers the word of another. That is part of our responsibility as Christians.

2- They are perfect ministers. There are those who save and meet the needs of others. They minister to God and to man.

3- They are perfect worshippers. They know how to adore and respect the King of kings.

4- They are perfect learners. They know how to learn from God. They know how to learn from us.

ANGELS MINISTER TO BELIEVERS

We began the third part in the last lesson, the ministry of angels to Christians.

- 1- They lead unbelievers to witnessing Christians.
- 2- They hear Jesus testify in heaven of our salvation.
- 3- They rejoice over our conversion in heaven.

4- They minister to our physical needs and guard our physical safety. We read,

Are not the angels all attending spirits, sent forth to serve for the sake of those who are going to be unceasing possessors of salvation?  
(Hebrews 1:14 Williams Translation)

In other words, aren't the angels ministering spirits? The King James Version says,

...for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

(Hebrews 1:14)

We also read,

The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him and He delivers them. (Psalm 34:7)

But the high priest rose up, along with all his associates, (that is the sect of the Sadducees) and they were filled with jealousy.

They laid hands on the apostles, and put them in a public jail.

But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the gates of the prison, and taking them out he said,

“Go (your way), stand and speak to the people in the temple the whole message of this Life.” (Acts 5:17-20 NASB)

They gave instructions to the men and set them free. We read:

And behold, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared and a light shone in the cell; and he struck Peter's side and woke him up, saying, “Get up quickly.” And his chains fell off his hands.

And the angel said to him, “Gird yourself and put on your sandals.” And he did so. And he said to him, “Wrap your cloak around you and follow me.”

And he went out and continued to follow, and he did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. (Acts 12:7-10 NASB)

## Testing: School for Angels (Part 2)

Peter followed the angel until he was free. A little further down in the passage he realized it really was an angel, and he really was out of prison.

In Matthew 4 we read of Jesus in the wilderness. He was being tested by Satan. The interesting part is in verse 11. At the end of that testing we read:

Then Jesus said to him, "Begone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and serve Him only.'"

Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him. (Matthew 4:10,11 NASB)

Angels also minister to God's children after they are tested. In I Peter we read:

And after you have suffered for a little while, our God who is full of grace will come and pick you up and set you firmly in place and make you stronger than before.

(I Peter 5:10 paraphrase)

God ministers to His saints through angels. I think that most of us have had experiences where we have been in dire physical need in our lives when, in the midst of those needs, seemingly out of nowhere, someone has come and ministered to us. There are circumstances that have taken place that we could not explain. We may have been driving along and had a flat tire. All of a sudden, someone would come along, seemingly out of nowhere and minister to us. We might be having a tremendous problem with no one to help, and the phone would ring with help. God, through His Spirit, uses His angels to minister to the needs of the saints.

### 5- The angels test our generosity and hospitality.

Let love of the brethren (brotherly love) continue.

Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.

(Hebrews 13:1,2 NASB)

We could spend the rest of the lesson on this point, but I will simply mention it. There may be times when your doorbell rings and it is an angel. You may say, "It doesn't look like it." Many times the phone rings and it is an angel. God is testing you to see if your heart is open and available to meet the needs of others. Jesus said, "When you've met the needs of the least of these, my brethren, you have done it unto Me." Many of you have had experiences when seemingly out of nowhere, someone has

Testing: School for Angels (Part 2)

come into your life and you could not help but minister to their needs. You didn't know why. I think that we need to recognize that this person or circumstance may be bringing into our lives an angel unaware to test our hospitality and our generosity. This Scripture says, "without knowing it." We don't know that they are angels at the time, but we simply know that they may be someone sent from God.

6-The angels carry us home when we die. We see this in Luke 16:22:

"The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side."  
(Luke 16:22 NIV)

7- The angels separate believers and unbelievers at the judgment day. We see this in Matthew 13:41-52. Paraphrased, part of that verse says, "they know now who is and who isn't God's own, but at that time they will make sure there are no mistakes."

8- The angels are awaiting Christ's return with us. We see this in Matthew 24:36.

But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

(Matthew 24:36 NASB)

It is obvious that no one knows the day or the hour Christ will return. Not even the Son or the angels know. The angels know Christ is coming back. They are excited about it. They have been taught by the Father. They are expectant. Yet, they do not know. They will be as shocked and surprised as we will. They don't know the day or the hour, but suddenly they will awaken with the same excitement as we will have when they realize this is the day the Lord will return for His own. They are awaiting Christ's return with us.

9- The angels will be with Him at the rapture. There will be at least one or two of the archangels. We don't know how many for sure.

The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

(I Thessalonians 4:16,17)

10- The angels will be with us as the Lord returns. We see this

Testing: School for Angels (Part 2)

in Matthew 16:27 and II Thessalonians 1:7. These passages tell us that the Lord, with the hosts of His angels and the host of His children, will come back to rule and to reign on this earth. The angelic host will be with us when we return with Christ for Him to rule. In Revelation 20:1-3, we see that at least one of the angels will be present to bind Satan at the end time.

BELIEVERS MINISTER TO ANGELS

The crux of this lesson is how do you and I minister to angels? What do they learn from us? We know how they minister to us, at least in part. What can you teach an angel? Have you ever thought about it? What can each of us individually teach an angel?

The following chart is the curriculum for God's school for angels. It is Grace College, located in heaven. The angels are in classrooms and they are studying for that final day. I want to give you five things they are studying and why. There will be five columns and five sections.

<b>Angels have never experienced:</b>	<b>Angels marvel at:</b>	<b>They learn experientially of:</b>	<b>Angels learn as they view our response to:</b>	<b>Scripture reference:</b>
Sin nature	Our salvation	God's grace	Redemption, forgiveness	I Pet. 1:3-12
Dual nature of man	Our sainthood	God's power	Continual warfare, victory	II Cor. 3:18
Life on planet earth	Our suffering	God's sovereignty	Hunger, pain, suffering, sickness, sorrow, age, death	I Cor. 4:9,10, 11-13; Rev. 21:3,4
Marriage	Our submission	God's purpose	Fellowship, marriage, submission, childbirth, parenthood	I Cor. 11:10
Never separated from God's presence	Our separation	God's love	Lonliness, rejection	Matt. 18:10

BELIEVERS ARE TEACHERS OF ANGELS

1- Because angels has never experienced the sin nature of man, they never cease to be amazed at the grace of God that saves man. Think of it. These are the five things that angels have not experienced because they do not have a sin nature. They have never experienced sin. They see the effects of sin on this earth. They watched as holy angels sinned and were cast out of heaven. They watched as Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden. They have watched from generation to generation as men and women have been born with a sin nature and because of that sin nature, they sin. But, they do not experientially have a knowledge of sin. They have seen its effects but have not experienced it.

2- Angels have not experienced guilt. There has never been a guilty angel. In order to have guilt, you have to have sin. They watched in the garden as Adam and Eve hid and said, "Maybe God won't find us here." They were hiding because they were afraid and guilty. The angels saw this, but they haven't experienced it. How do you handle guilt? I believe that angels are watching you and learning from you how to handle guilt. Do you handle it according to Scripture, or do you carry it around in a knapsack on your back? Angels are learning from you how to handle guilt.

3- Angels have never experienced separation from God by sin. You and I have. We were born separated from God. As soon as we sinned, we were separated from God. We had to be bought back into His presence by the blood of Jesus Christ. The angels understand that, but they have not experienced it.

4- The angels have never experienced forgiveness. You can't be forgiven if you haven't sinned. They have never experienced the joy of having your sins forgiven and cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. They don't understand it. They do understand it intellectually, but they haven't experienced it. Therefore, they have never experienced redemption. They have never been lost and found. They are watching and learning from us. How do you testify of your redemption? How do you handle forgiveness? The angels are in awe watching you handle your redemption.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled

## Testing: School for Angels (Part 2)

and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,  
who are protected by the power of God through faith for a  
salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while,  
if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials,

that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold  
which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found  
to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of  
Jesus Christ;

and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and  
though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you  
greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your  
souls. (I Peter 1:3-9 NASB)

There are three things guaranteed a Christian in this passage:

1- Verses 3-5 guarantee our salvation. It is being kept by the  
power of God ready to be revealed at the last time. In other words,  
your salvation is incorruptible, undefiled and reserved in heaven  
for you.

2- In verses 6 and 7 we read that in addition to your salvation  
being secure, your testing is guaranteed. You will be tested. It  
says,

so that the genuineness of your faith, which is more precious  
than gold that perishes even after it is shown by the test of  
fire to be genuine, may result in your praise and glory and  
honor at the unveiling of Jesus Christ.

(I Peter 1:6,7 Williams Translation)

3- Your glory is guaranteed in verses 8 and 9. If you suffer  
with Christ, you shall reign with Him.

We are guaranteed salvation. We are guaranteed testing. We  
are guaranteed the resulting glory.

Try to visualize the rest of this passage and the two-tiered  
perspective of truth. The prophets are in one place. The angels  
are in another place. The church is in another place.

Even the prophets who prophesied about the spiritual  
blessing meant for you, made careful investigation and  
persistent research about this salvation

earnestly trying to find out the time, the nature of times  
which the spirit of Christ was pointing to in foretelling the  
sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.



## Testing: School for Angels (Part 2)

It was made known to them that they were serving not themselves, but you, in their searching for these things that have already been told to you by those who through the Holy Spirit, sent from heaven, brought to you the good news. The angels long to take a peek into these things.

(I Peter 1:10-12 Williams Translation)

These are the things the angels long to look into. The word is “*epithumao*” which is an intense longing. It means “on the edge of your chair” expectancy. The angels are sitting in heaven, falling off their clouds, so to speak, looking down, trying to see what is going on. They are amazed and in awe at the grace of God resulting from the salvation of lost men.

In other words, this passage is telling us that the prophets were looking forward with a telescope. They knew their message was not for them but for us. They had the prophecy and they understood God’s plan.

The angels are looking down on us. They have the principles and they understand God’s purpose. While the prophets understood the plan and the angels understand the purpose, only the church has reality because the church experiences God’s life. The angels can’t do that.

Imagine there are seconds left in an important sports game. One team is close to winning when the television or radio goes off. You are left hanging. You don’t know what happened. This is what the angels are experiencing. They are trying earnestly to see the results of this situation. They don’t want anything to stand in their way. The same word is used in Luke 16:21 when it talks about Lazarus the beggar desiring to be fed crumbs from his master’s table. This is how the angels are feeling.

We have to understand the concept of experiencing reality versus knowing truth. You can know a lot of things and not experience them. You can be an armchair coach and know all of the things you would do if you were the real coach. The problem is that you are not the coach and ultimately it is the real coach’s decision because he has experienced all of the things needed to lead a football team. Those of us who are fathers can talk about childbirth, but we have never experienced it like our wives have. Who would you go to if you wanted instruction on how to raise your children? Would you go to a professor who is teaching a class or a mother of twelve children? Experience, that is what counts.

## Testing: School for Angels (Part 2)

Angels cannot experience saving grace. My favorite song is sung by Ed Lyman. It goes like this:

“Holy, holy, holy,” is what the angels sing.  
I expect their song can make the courts of heaven ring.  
But when I sing redemption’s story, they all fold their wings  
For angels never felt the joy that our salvation brings.

I know that I’m not an angel but I know that over there  
I will sing that blessed chorus that the angels cannot share.  
I will sing about my Savior, who upon that Calvary tree  
Freely pardoned my transgressions, died to set the sinner free.

“Holy, holy, holy,” that’s what the angels sing.  
I expect their song can make the courts of heaven ring.  
But when I sing redemption’s story, they all fold their wings  
For angels never felt the joy that our salvation brings.

### ANGELS CANNOT EXPERIENCE THE REALITY OF REDEMPTION

1- Because angels have never experienced the dual nature of man, there are other things that they have to learn from us. It says,

to make clear how is to be carried out the trusteeship of this secret which has for ages been hidden away in God, the creator of all things,

so that the many phases of God’s wisdom may now through the church be made known to the rulers and authorities in heaven, (to the angels)

in accordance with the eternal purpose which God executed in the gift of Jesus Christ our Lord.

By union with Him and through faith in Him we have free and confidential introduction to God.

(Ephesians 3:9-12 Williams Translation)

This is the mystery of the church. Jew and Gentile alike are called together, given the Holy Spirit, now living on earth and in heaven. The angels don’t understand that because of the limitations of the dual nature. They have never lived with a dual nature. They have never had sin maintaining residence in their body, having the Holy Spirit resident, giving them heaven on earth in the Spirit and yet having to deal with the flesh continually. You and I have to do this all day long, every day. The angels have never dealt with this. They are amazed. They don’t understand the mystery of the dual nature of the Christian. They

don't understand the mystery of the daily walk where there is continual victory and continual warfare. They don't understand spiritual transformation as we see in II Corinthians 3:18 where we grow from one degree of glory to another as we overcome the evil one. The angels are learning this from you and me. They get some bad lessons, don't they? As they are in heaven, they long to and earnestly desire to look into the mystery of the believer living on earth. They don't understand it. There are some things they can't understand about so they have to look at us. We are all they have.

2- Because they have never experienced the limitations of the flesh or life on earth, they marvel at our suffering. I want to read these verses first:

For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.

We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are prudent in Christ; we are weak but you are strong; (I Corinthians 4:9,10 NASB)

Verses 11-13 go on to talk about the tribulation of apostleship. The background on this passage is the persecution of the apostles. In the Williams translation verse 9 says:

For (but rather) it seems that God has put us apostles on exhibition at the disgraced end of the procession...

(I Corinthians 4:9 Williams Translation)

In the morning when the gladiator shows would begin, they would put forth men who were completely clad in armor, prepared to do battle. They would fight the beasts clothed with all of their armor. As the day progressed, they brought out the ones who were sentenced to die and doomed to death. Not only did they not have armor, they oftentimes sent them out naked before the beasts to be ripped apart. The ones who didn't get torn up were saved in a pen for the next day. They were men who were destined to death. They were appointed unto death. They were called the last. They were saved for the last.

This is the term that is used here. It says, "We apostles seemed to be saved for the last. We are on exhibition. Our suffering is on exhibition to the world, to men and to angels." The word "world" here means cosmos, the whole world order. I believe this also includes the saints in Hebrews 12:1 and 2 who have gone before. They are seated around the amphitheater of heaven, observing

the grace of God in our lives.

Men and women, you and I, are God's agents to reveal the grace of God to the world. The angels are watching how we do this. The angels are observing our suffering. We are a spectacle to the angels. The word "spectacle" comes from the word "theatron" which is the word from which we get theatre. It means to be exhibited as a spectacle. The apostle is saying that the angels are looking at the suffering of the saints. They are viewing the suffering of Christ and the glory that is to follow. They are amazed. They don't understand it.

Angels have never experienced suffering in the way that we do. The angels have never gone to pick up their paycheck and had too many deductions. Angels have never been ridiculed by their fellow employees. Angels have never had car failures. Angels have never lost their job. Angels have never had marriage problems.

3- Angels have never had sickness. There are no hospitals or drug stores in heaven. There are no physical bodies to get physically ill. I believe that when believers are in the hospital there are angels hovering about the room trying to discern how Christians handle sickness. I really believe this. They have never experienced sickness. As our body is diseased, they are looking at us. They have never experienced pain. I think the most beautiful passage in the Bible is Revelation 21:3 and 4 where it says that God will wipe away all of the tears from our eyes and there will be no more sorrow, death or pain. The angels are watching believers suffering from pain. They are trying to discern what the believer is going through and how they are handling it. They want to see how God's grace is adequate for it.

4- I don't believe the angels have experienced the physical hardships we do. I don't believe that angels have ever experienced hunger. I don't believe they have ever experienced poverty. I don't believe they have ever been in financial bondage. I don't believe there has ever been a problem of the angels making their harp payments. I don't believe there has ever been a cherubimic pawnshop that they have had to go to in order to meet the families needs because they don't have families.

5- There has been discontentment among angels as we know Lucifer fell and took a group with him. I don't believe they have been comparing the size of their wings and being discontented if they were not shaped like the one next to them.

## Testing: School for Angels (Part 2)

6- Angels have never experienced age. I don't believe they have had a 6,000th birthday party for Gabriel. They are amazed as they see us grow older and move toward the time of death.

7- I don't believe angels have experienced the pressures of time. I don't believe there are any watches in heaven. I think they are amazed as they watch us operate under such schedules.

8- I don't believe angels have ever had to experience death. We know they haven't. I believe that angels attend over every funeral. First of all, they take the beloved home to be with the Lord. Others are there to observe the testimony of saints at the death of their loved ones. They have never been separated from the other angels, except for the ones who have been cast out of heaven. They have never experienced a personal funeral. I think they stand in awe. I think they gather at the funerals of saints in order to watch the behavior and the victory of the saints in the midst of death.

9- Lastly, the angels have never experienced the resurrection. They have seen Jesus resurrected from the dead. They sat at the tomb. They were with Him at His ascension. But they have never experienced it nor will they ever. They know that every saint will some day rise again.

There are many things the angels learn because of our suffering. How well do you suffer? You are teaching angels by the way you are handling these things.

Because they have never experienced the fellowship of marriage, they have to learn from us the miracle of submission and the roles of Christ in the church. I Corinthians 11:10 talks about the wives' role of submission and how she is to maintain that role because of the angels. It is a demonstration to the angels. The passage talks in particular about the woman's head being veiled or covered. The symbolism is a testimony to the angels that she is in subjection to her husband who is in subjection to Christ, who is in subjection to the Father.

The angels learn the magnificence of marriage from us. I went to a wedding last night and I could visualize angels hovering about, viewing the ceremony. They understood a lot of things. They understood that the bride wore white symbolizing the imputed righteousness of Christ. They understood the bride came down the aisle to meet the groom because we will be caught up together to meet our groom, Jesus Christ, in the air. They

## Testing: School for Angels (Part 2)

understood the reception because they knew that one day there would be a wedding feast in heaven where all of God's saints and children would be gathered together. They understood the ring because they know that there is the seal of the Holy Spirit placed upon the believer that signifies that we are His for all of eternity. They understood the exchanging of the vows. They even understood the music. Nonetheless, they have never experienced a wedding or a marriage. They are viewing your marriage as a symbol of how Christ relates to the church and the how the role of the woman and the role of the man speaks to the role of God in the church. That is what they are observing. They are looking at your marriage. You are teaching angels by your marriage.

I don't believe there has ever been a pregnant angel. I say with reverence that I don't believe that angels have experienced having a life born within them. I believe that they stand in awe and are amazed. I don't believe an angel has ever experienced the joy of childbirth and seeing new life brought into this world. I don't believe that angels have ever experienced the joy of parenthood.

I don't believe there has ever been an angel who has experienced these things. The angels are observing believers through their marriage, their pregnancy, their childbirth and their parenthood. They are viewing the wonders of the grace of God through you. They are seeing how these things should be handled.

Because they have always been in the presence of God, I don't believe the angels learn, except from us, how to deal with loneliness. Matthew 18:10 says that our angels always behold the face of our Father. Can you imagine always being in the presence of God? Because they have, I believe that they have to take a course from us about loneliness. I don't believe that an angel has ever suffered from rejection. How could you be rejected when in the presence of God? How many of you can feel rejected when you are worshipping God? That is the one time in our life when we feel accepted. I don't believe an angel has ever suffered from loneliness because they always adore, worship and face the face of God. As they see believers separated in their spirits from God and being separated by miles or death from their loved ones, they see how we handle loneliness and rejection. They are amazed and they learn from us.

I don't believe that an angel has ever suffered from persecution.

Your guardian angels have never experienced the sin nature.

## Testing: School for Angels (Part 2)

They have never experienced the dual nature of man. They have never experienced the limitations of the flesh and the limitations of living on planet earth. They have never experienced marriage. I believe they have never experienced loneliness. It is through your tests and your response to those tests that they learn of salvation, sainthood, suffering, submission and security. They know the principles but they need your life to taste more fully of the cup of God's grace.

How can you teach an angel? I have named many ways in this lesson: the way you handle age, the way you handle parenthood, the way you handle your testimony, the way you handle suffering and pain, the way you handle submission and the way you handle your family relationships. These are lessons to the angelic hosts. God, in His grace, so trusts us that He has said to the angels, "Hey, class is in session. Look here. I want you to learn of Me by watching them."

I don't know if this motivates you or not. It stirs me to think about the next time I am tested, which will probably be real soon. Not only is God testing me to humble me and teach me and to prove to Satan His faithfulness, He is testing me to teach angels His grace, His power and His love. So be aware, first of all, of their presence and their interest in what you are doing. Be obedient to the Word motivated by the role that you realize you now have as an example and as an instructor to angels. Then be thankful that God counts you worthy to be His classroom for those who are His perfect messengers, worshippers, servants and students. I want to close with this poem:

### A TEACHER OF ANGELS

The angels in heaven continually serve  
And worship beneath God's throne.  
They minister daily to God Himself  
And they minister to His own.

They sing and rejoice when even one  
Responds to the gospel's call,  
And eagerly, watchfully they await  
His coming to take us all.

But the angels are also learning,  
Learning from you and from me,  
Learning the power and wisdom of God  
As we live it for them to see.

Testing: School for Angels (Part 2)

For they have not experienced sin themselves  
And though daily they gaze on His face,  
Still never has ever an angel himself  
Experienced God's saving grace.

They marvel at all of our suffering  
And His glory through it all.  
They marvel at hunger, rejection and pain  
And that is a part of God's call.

They marvel at age, at time, at birth,  
They marvel at sin's deep stain.  
They marvel at death, but in awe  
They know that His saints will rise again.

They marvel at every wedding,  
Two people becoming one,  
They view it and wonder while waiting  
For the wedding feast to come.

So you are a teacher of angels.  
They marvel at every test.  
They learn of God as you rejoice  
And in suffering learn to rest.

Yes, you are a teacher of angels  
Though one day over them you will rule.  
Today, you are a teacher of angels  
And the life that you live is their school.

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