



BIBLE

STUDENT BOOK

▶ **11th Grade | Unit 4**

BIBLE 1104

THE DOCTRINE OF JESUS CHRIST

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The Doctrine of Jesus Christ

Introduction

Your beliefs about Jesus Christ determine your relationship to him. He is the Savior and the Lord. Is Jesus Christ your Savior and Lord? The doctrine of Jesus Christ affects everyone who studies it. The study of this LIFEPAK® will make you more like Christ. You will be making knowledge of the Savior a part of your soul. In this LIFEPAK you will study the two divisions of the doctrine of Jesus Christ: his person and his work.

Christology challenges the understanding of theologians. Throughout the history of the church, this doctrine has provoked at least a dozen controversies which have divided churches and church leaders. You should pray that the Spirit of God will enlighten your mind about the Son of God.

The doctrine of Jesus Christ intertwines with every other doctrine. This doctrine affects the doctrine of God because Jesus Christ is the Second Person of the Godhead. This doctrine also forms the foundation for the doctrine of salvation, and it affects the doctrine of Scriptures to a great degree. The Bible is our only primary source of information about Jesus Christ. Jesus taught us that the Bible is the Word of God.

Truths about Jesus Christ appear in both the Old and New Testaments. Every page of the Scriptures manifests him in some way. These truths take many forms: prophecy, word pictures, appearances in various ways, references to him, and messages from him. Two disciples from Emmaus learned of the centrality of Christ in the Bible from the resurrected Christ himself. As Jesus walked with them (Luke 24:27), "... he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." After recognizing him (Luke 24:32), "... they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" This LIFEPAK comes to you with the prayer that your heart too may burn with passion for him whom you study.

Objectives

Read these objectives. The objectives tell you what you will be able to do when you have successfully completed this LIFEPAK. When you have finished this LIFEPAK, you should be able to:

1. Identify the various viewpoints about Jesus Christ.
2. Define the names given to Jesus Christ.
3. Explain how the Son of God became a man.
4. Give evidence of the deity of Jesus Christ.
5. Describe the human nature and the personality of Jesus Christ.
6. Identify the activities of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament.
7. Describe the earthly ministry and the death of Jesus Christ.
8. Explain the atonement of Christ and its effects.
9. Describe the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ and give evidence for it.
10. Describe the present activities of Jesus Christ.

1. THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST

The person of Jesus Christ, who he is, gives value and power to his work, what he does. Because he is the Son of God, for instance, he can atone for the sins of the world. Before you can understand his works, you must recognize his person.

In this section you will answer three questions about the person of Christ. First, who is he? — his identity. Second, how did he come? — his **incarnation**. Third, what is he like? — his individuality.

Section Objectives

Review these objectives. When you have completed this section, you should be able to:

1. Identify the various viewpoints about Jesus Christ.
2. Define the names given to Jesus Christ.
3. Explain how the Son of God became a man.
4. Give evidence of the deity of Jesus Christ.
5. Describe the human nature and the personality of Jesus Christ.

Vocabulary

Study these words to enhance your learning success in this section.

advocate	credibility	immutable	kenosis	omnipotent	orthodox
Christology	deity	incarnation	logos	omniscient	skeptic

Note: All vocabulary words in this LIFEPAC appear in **boldface** print the first time they are used. If you are not sure of the meaning when you are reading, study the definitions given.



Read Matthew 16:13–20 and John 7–11

WHO JESUS CHRIST IS: HIS IDENTITY

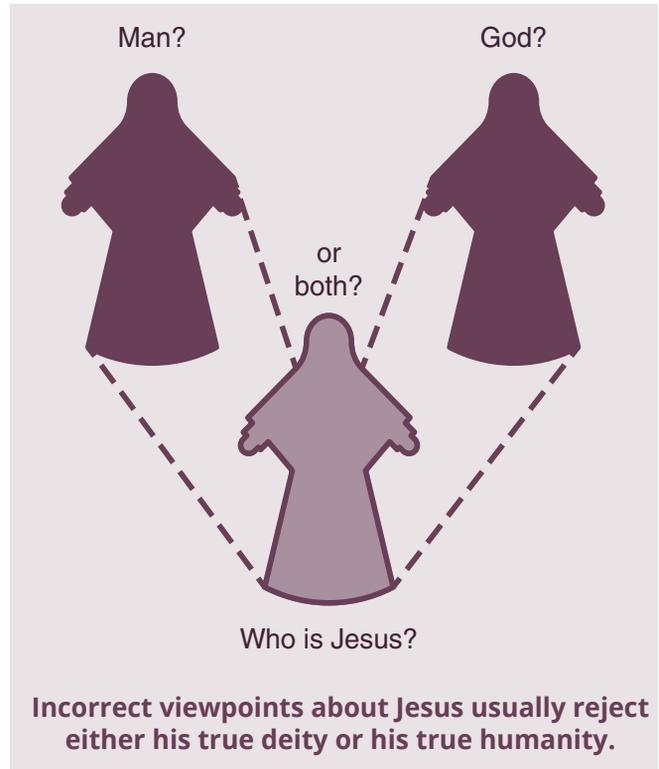
The first and foremost question haunting the souls of people should be (Matthew 22:42), "... What think ye of Christ?..." When the first century Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus, confronted the glorified Christ, he asked (Acts 9:5), "... Who art thou, Lord?" Jesus recognized people's perplexity about his identity. Jesus tested the disciples' discernment with this question (Matthew 16:13), "... Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" According to the disciples' reply (Matthew 16:14), public rumors had identified him as one of the prophets returned from the dead. In contrast, Peter confessed his faith in the true identity of Jesus (Matthew 16:16), "... Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Every one must answer the question of who Jesus Christ is. Those who answer incorrectly have no hope of personal salvation. Jesus affirmed this principle to the perplexed Jews in the Temple (John 8:24–25), "... if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning."

We who know and trust Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior need to know him better. When we do know him more, our lives will become more Christlike (2 Corinthians 3:18). The same desire that drove Paul should be our highest pursuit (Philippians 3:7–8), "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord"

Two types of answers to the identity of Jesus Christ deserve our investigation. We shall study the viewpoints of men, and we shall study the names of Jesus Christ in Scripture.

Viewpoints about Jesus Christ. A person's opinion about the identity of Jesus Christ serves as a test of **orthodoxy** and as a standard of fellowship within the church (2 John 7–11). Those who do not acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ do not know God (2 John 7 and 9). On the other hand, those who know Jesus Christ know God (2 John 9). This issue carries such importance that Christians and churches must clearly differentiate between those who reject Christ



and those who accept Christ (2 John 10). God himself divides the human race on this basis.

Viewpoints that reject the true nature of Jesus Christ are held by a majority of the world (John 1:10–11), "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not."

Some viewpoints reject his true **deity**. Those who see Jesus Christ as someone less than God identify him as just a great man, or as one endowed with divine power, or as one who united with the divine nature.

Some people identify Jesus Christ as just a great man. Such a modern portrayal depicts him as one who tried to be great but whose end was the grave like all other historical figures. With this view, everyone sees in Jesus a little of himself. A social activist, for example, sees Jesus as a political revolutionary. Some attribute his fame to his charismatic

leadership. Many religious people consider Jesus to be little more than a godly teacher. Some religious leaders still believe that Jesus was a sinner. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, for example, attempts to compensate for Jesus's supposed sinfulness by depicting him as a humanitarian who lived for others. Similarly, Reinhold Niebuhr counterbalances Jesus, the supposed sinner, with Jesus, the symbol of divine love.

Unfortunately, the critical view of the Bible held by many modern theologians clouds their vision of Jesus Christ. The Jesus of history, they say, has been whitewashed and idealized by the "myths" of the Gospels. In their words, the real Jesus did not have a supernatural nature nor did he perform any miracles. The successors of Jesus Christ, who wrote the New Testament, made him out to be divine.

Some people identify him as a man endowed with divine power. Many non-Christian religions view Jesus as another of the great biblical prophets. Islam concedes his importance but makes Muhammad greater than Jesus. Many modern Jews have begun to recognize Jesus in this sense. Much of liberal Christianity shares a similar viewpoint. Such viewpoints explain Jesus's power as residing in the spark of divinity possessed by each of us. Jesus succeeded, they say, in fanning that spark brighter than anyone else.

Some people identify him as a man who united with the divine nature. This viewpoint contradicts the Bible by teaching that Jesus never was God even after this union. The terms **logos** and "Christ" identify his divine nature. In the original language of the New Testament, the Greek word *lógos* means *word*. John 1:1 and 14 use logos as a name of God when becoming a man. These people use "Christ" to represent the divine nature in contrast to the name "Jesus" by which they designate the man.

Among the earliest of these heresies were the viewpoints of the Gnostics. Their teachings had an influence upon Cerinthus in the first and second centuries

A.D. He believed that this union of the logos with Jesus took place at his baptism when the Holy Spirit came upon him. Cerinthus thought that this divine nature then left Jesus to suffer alone during his Crucifixion. The Ebionites, a Jewish-Christian sect, shared this viewpoint in the second century A.D.

A fourth-century Gnostic, Arius, taught that the logos which united with the humanity of Jesus was not God himself, rather he was the first and highest angel created by God. The Jehovah's Witnesses today still perpetuate this viewpoint. Nestorius speculated in the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. that the logos and the man Jesus, whom he indwelt, were two separate persons.

Certain variations of these viewpoints have emerged in more recent times. In the sixteenth century, Socinus theorized that God adopted the man Jesus to be his Son at some point during his lifetime. The Unitarian religion today shares this viewpoint. The modern theologian, Karl Barth, taught his students that the Christ gradually grew in Jesus who had a sinful nature.

Some viewpoints reject his true humanity. A group of Gnostics in the first and second centuries A.D. were dubbed "Docetics," meaning "to appear." They supposed that Christ did not have a human body at all. They believed his body just seemed to appear.

In the fourth century A.D., Apollinarius taught that Christ did not possess a human spirit. The logos, he said, took the place of the spirit in the person of Jesus Christ. The late Henry Ward Beecher, a popular American preacher, held a similar viewpoint. Beecher claimed that only Jesus's body was formed from his mother, Mary, and that the entire immaterial part of Jesus came from God.

In the fifth century A.D., Eutychus speculated that Jesus Christ possessed only one nature, not two. In effect, his divine nature supposedly absorbed his human nature.

Complete this interaction activity.

- 1.1** After reading and studying this portion of the LIFEPAC, discuss with a parent or your classmates the ways people today deny the biblical viewpoint of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some viewpoints respect his true nature, others do not. Some people deny his deity; some deny his humanity. During your discussion, make a list of the ways people deny Christ's true nature.



CHECK

_____ Teacher

_____ Date

Match the following items.

- | | | | | |
|------|-------|-------------------------|----|---|
| 1.2 | _____ | a majority of the world | a. | confessed the true identity of Christ |
| 1.3 | _____ | Dietrich Bonhoeffer | b. | believed Christ did not have a human body |
| 1.4 | _____ | Islam | c. | a Gnostic |
| 1.5 | _____ | <i>lógos</i> | d. | views Jesus as just another prophet |
| 1.6 | _____ | Cerinthus | e. | rejects Christ's true nature |
| 1.7 | _____ | Ebionites | f. | sound doctrine |
| 1.8 | _____ | Karl Barth | g. | taught that Christ grew in Jesus |
| 1.9 | _____ | Docetics | h. | Jewish-Christian sect |
| 1.10 | _____ | Peter | i. | Greek for <i>word</i> |
| 1.11 | _____ | Orthodox | j. | considered Christ to be a sinner |

Find these verses in your Bible and write what people called Jesus even in his own day.

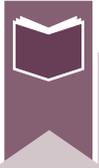
- 1.12 Matthew 11:19 _____
- 1.13 John 5:16 _____
- 1.14 John 7:12 _____
- 1.15 John 8:48 _____
- 1.16 John 9:24 _____

Viewpoints that respect the true nature of Jesus Christ raise a relevant question. What differentiates between those who reject his true nature and those who respect his true nature? Essentially, the latter accept the portrayal of him in the Bible. The basic issue is faith. This faith is in the written Word of God, the Bible, and its portrait of the incarnate Word of God, Jesus Christ.

When Peter confessed the true identity of Jesus Christ (Matthew 16:16), how did he know the truth? Jesus himself answered (Matthew 16:17), "... Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." The truth about Jesus Christ must come from divine revelation, and divine revelation is accepted by faith.

Faith accepts the true humanity of Jesus Christ as well as his true deity. "Doubting Thomas" found it impossible to believe that the other disciples had seen Jesus alive after his burial (John 20:24–25). One week later Jesus appeared to them and challenged Thomas (John 20:27): "... Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing." Faced with the evidence of Jesus's humanity, Thomas confessed (John 20:28), "... My Lord and my God." Jesus then commended the faith of all who believe in him and his true nature (John 20:29): "... blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

In the twenty centuries since Jesus made that statement, millions of believers with the eyes of faith have been blessed with a true view of Jesus Christ. Even so, he becomes someone special to each one.



To the baker he is the Living Bread; to the biologist he is the Life; to the builder he is the Foundation; to the doctor he is the great Physician; to the farmer he is the Lord of the Harvest; to the geologist he is the Rock of Ages; to the lawyer he is the Advocate; to the oculist he is the Light of the world; to the sculptor he is the Living Stone; to the servant he is the Master; to the statesman he is the Prince of Peace; to the student he is the Truth; to the traveler he is the Way; to the undertaker he is the Resurrection.

Names of Jesus Christ. In Bible times people used descriptive words as names for people, places, and things. Bible names describe the nature or character of persons. God uses descriptive names of himself to reveal his nature and character to his people. Jesus revealed the heavenly Father to his disciples by declaring his name to them (John 17:6 and 26). The nature and character of Christ also is revealed by descriptive names.

A person's name represents the person himself. God's people in Bible times revered God's name as they revered God himself. The name of Jesus Christ deserves our esteem as much as does his person (Philippians 2:9–10): "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow"

The name of Jesus Christ, symbolizing Christ himself, represents the object of our faith and the subject of our witness (Acts 4:12): "... For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Throughout the New Testament, faith in his name equals faith in Jesus Christ (Matthew 12:21; John 1:12; Acts 3:16; and 1 John 5:13). The glorified Christ commissioned Paul to be a witness to his name among the nations of that day (Acts 9:15–16).

How many names and titles describe Jesus Christ? James Large gives his answer in the title of his book, *280 Titles and Symbols of Jesus Christ*. This LIFEPAAC does not attempt to be that exhaustive. However, certain names of Jesus Christ deserve special mention. These names fall into four clusters.

His full title is the Lord Jesus Christ. These three names together form his most complete title. This title includes his divine title, his personal name, and his official title, respectively. Each one conveys a unique significance.

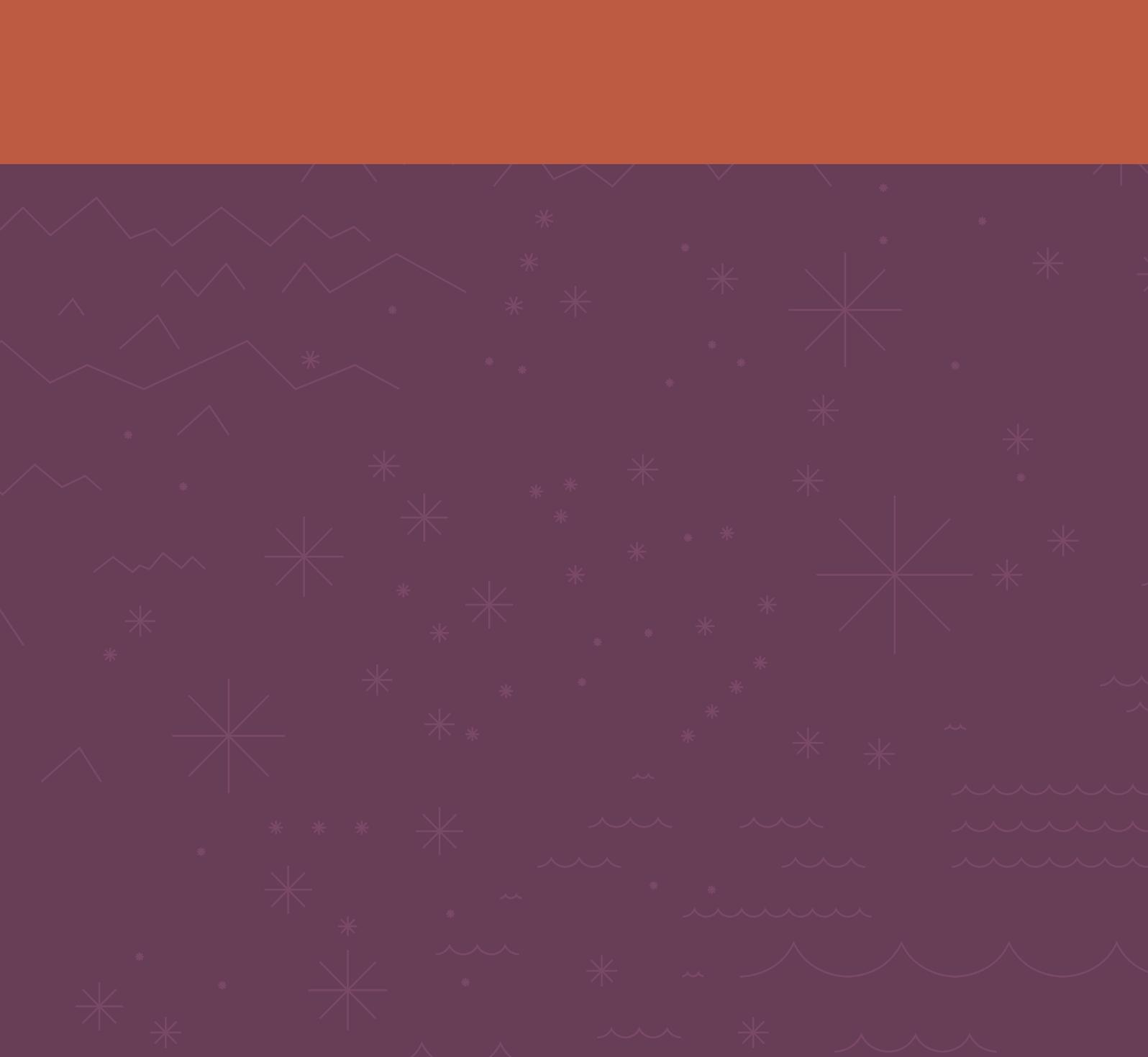
The title *Lord* associates Jesus with Jehovah, an Old Testament name for God. One evidence of this association occurs in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament (Greek being the original language of the New Testament). The Septuagint uses this word, *Lord*, to translate *Jehovah*. Another evidence of this association occurs where the New Testament quotes the Old Testament. For example, Satan tempted Jesus in the desert with the challenge (Matthew 4:6), "... If thou be the Son of God" In his reply Jesus cited Deuteronomy 6:16 (Matthew 4:7), "... Thou shalt not tempt the Lord [Jehovah] thy God."

The title *Lord*, then, equates Jesus with God. Those who knew him best, his disciples, used this title with that significance. Thomas exclaimed to the resurrected Christ (John 20:28), "... My Lord and my God." This title accompanied worship in Matthew 8:2: "... There came a leper and worshiped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."

Lordship signifies supremacy. Acts 10:36 declares of Jesus, "... he is Lord of all." His lordship today derives from his resurrection from the dead and his exaltation in glory (Romans 14:9): "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living."

Furthermore, lordship relates to kingship. According to Revelation 17:14, "... He is Lord of lords, and King of kings"

Lordship also signifies ownership. Before Jesus's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, he directed two disciples to bring him a colt to ride. The colt's owners questioned them (Luke 19:33–34), "... Why loose ye the colt? And they said, The Lord hath need of him." They yielded their ownership to the Lord's ownership. Your life, likewise, must change ownership if Christ is to be your Lord.



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