

My Kingdom Is Not of This World

The purpose of this Article is to consider the nature of the Kingdom of Jesus, the Messiah. Since all kingdoms and forms of government possess the power to bestow and to demand, we will view our Lord's kingdom in terms of what is conferred upon and required of all subjects of His kingdom. We will also ponder the relevancy of His kingdom while considering current events – both individually and globally. We are living in the perilous times (beginning of at least) the Apostle Paul foresaw, but our Lord has promised to be with us, even to the very end of this age.

Recall, with me, the conversation reported by John, the disciple, as Jesus was brought before the Roman governor in Judea, Pontius Pilate.

(Joh 18:33 KJV) Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?

(Joh 18:34 KJV) Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?

(Joh 18:35 KJV) Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?

(Joh 18:36 KJV) Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

(Joh 18:37 KJV) Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

My Kingdom Is Not of This World

Verse 37 in the Amplified Bible says,

Pilate said to Him, Then You are a King? Jesus answered, You say it! [You speak correctly!] For I am a King. [Certainly I am a King!] This is why I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the Truth. Everyone who is of the Truth [who is a friend of the Truth, who belongs to the Truth] hears and listens to My voice.

Isn't it a wonder: the numerous occurrences in Scripture when evil human designs provide an occasion for God's most profound truths to be displayed? “You intended evil against me, but God meant it for good”, is the informed conclusion of Joseph as he recalled his brother's treachery bowing a hateful knee before the wisdom and providence of God. The gospels record the murderous plot of the Jewish leaders couched within their accusations before Pilate: **(Luk 23:1 KJV) And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate.**

(Luk 23:2 KJV) And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King.

To secure the Roman death penalty against Jesus, the scheming Jewish leadership brought our Lord before the Roman governor certain that the accusation of claims to be a King would sufficiently offend Rome. In applying such an evil design these men provided an opportunity for this magnificent truth to be spoken:

“My kingdom is not of this world.”

My Kingdom Is Not of This World

Our Lord's kingdom is not an earthly one in the sense that its authority is not derived from this present world. The world did not give it, and the world cannot take it away. There is no need for servants to fight to preserve that which is not threatened. Daniel was permitted to understand something of the unique character of this kingdom:

Dan 2:45 Because you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands...

“Without hands”, is the key phrase that distinguishes our Lord's kingdom from all others. Since human hands could not establish this kingdom, it follows that human hands cannot modify or destroy it. Daniel also understood that this unique kingdom would eventually displace and supersede all the governments of this world and fill the entire earth.

Dan 2:34 You continued until a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them to pieces.

Dan 2:35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were together broken to pieces, and they became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors. And the wind carried them away so that no place was found for them. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Now because there are future dimensions to this great Kingdom, we should not forget the present tense reality. Jesus said, “**My kingdom is ...**” Pilate inquired, “**are you a king**”? After the resurrection and shortly before His ascension, Jesus said, “**All authority has been given unto Me ...**” During His ministry throughout Galilee and Judea, Jesus manifested and proclaimed the Kingdom continually. **(Mat 4:23 LITV) And Jesus went**

My Kingdom Is Not of This World

around all Galilee teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness among the people.

(Luk 4:32 LITV) And they were astonished at His doctrine, because His Word was with authority.

He spoke with authority (as One having authority) and He performed actions requiring authority. Jesus did not treat disease and sickness with poultices or herbs or counseling sessions; He healed them because He had authority over them. This means that the realm of His kingdom (government) included the causes and cures for all ailments of body, mind and spirit. He commanded Beings unperceived by human senses and they all recognized His domination, immediately withdrawing their diabolical disorders from the afflicted.

The natural order surrendered to Him: laws of gravity; laws of time; laws influencing weather and environment; laws of mass and volume; laws governing decomposition; laws holding an awful grip on both life and death. This shows the jurisdiction of His kingdom included all the created order of time and space.

Jesus demonstrated His authority over all areas of the human interior life. He addressed the thought life – the center of human motivation and intention. The Sermon on the Mount circumvents external actions alone and makes a precision strike on the concealed intersection of mind and spirit. The rebuke of beloved disciples when they seek permission to “call fire down” upon those who have brought an insult, illustrates His rule over not only what may be said but the spirit which influences words. Most graphic, perhaps, of all, is the authority demonstrated by our Lord in cleansing the temple of all carnal commercialism and its associated pollution of the house of prayer. There is zeal – an ardent fervency – in Jesus as he demonstrates His authority within the place ordained for communion with God.

My Kingdom Is Not of This World

(1Co 3:16 MKJV) Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

The kingdom of Jesus, the Messiah, has authority over the temple of God. It is His business what takes place there. He possesses absolute right of rule there in the interior life of every person. Every thought, intention, motive, desire and mind/spirit transaction take place under His direct purview and within the realm of His authority. This MUST be understood! **(1Co 6:19 MKJV) Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit in you, whom you have of God? And you are not your own,**

(1Co 6:20 MKJV) for you are bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. “And you are not your own”, is true of every human being, not just those who have already recognized this truth. **(Rom 14:7 LITV) For no one of us lives to himself and no one dies to himself.**

(Rom 14:8 LITV) For both if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Then both if we live, and if we die, we are the Lord's.

(Rom 14:9 LITV) For this Christ both died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord over both the dead and the living.

Scripture reveals the kingdom of the Messiah, Jesus, and establishes the realm over which He rules. We exist at this moment under the authority of this domain, and yet the kingdom has not been manifested in its fullness. Even though Jesus is, right now, Lord (possesses the right to rule) over all the interior life of every individual, the freedom to choose that lordship is now granted to us.

My Kingdom Is Not of This World

(Luk 13:34 LITV) Jerusalem! Jerusalem! The one killing the prophets, and stoning those having been sent to her, how often I desired to gather your children in the way a hen gathers her brood under the wings, and you did not desire it.

This freedom to choose is not a matter to handle lightly; it is attended by enormous consequences – so great in fact that some might question why this liberty is granted to man. Nevertheless, the wisdom of God has ordained it and eternity future will fully disclose the reasons.

Remember as we proceed, Jesus is now sovereign over all the interior life of every person, including thoughts, desires, motivations, imaginations, and decisions. All these occur within His jurisdiction and in the full view of His countenance. All our efforts to deny this reality are indeed futile. If we would resolve that all the world's religions and religious leaders are coequal, we would speak thus before His throne. If we would approve humanistic manifestos by the dozens, asserting our independence and insisting that we are accountable to ourselves alone, we do so before His throne. Should someone allege that Jesus has been followed by a more prominent prophet whose supposed revelations carry greater authority, they advance all this ideology while standing in front of His throne. Only one Supreme Seat of Government exists, and the ONE Who occupies that Throne carries unique markings upon His brow, side, hands and feet.

(Heb 1:1 LITV) In many ways and in various ways of old, God spoke to the fathers in the prophets;

My Kingdom Is Not of This World

(Heb 1:2 LITV) in these last days He spoke to us in the Son, whom He appointed heir of all; through whom He indeed made the ages; (Heb 1:3 LITV) who being the shining splendor of His glory, and the express image of His essence, and upholding all things by the Word of His power, having made purification of our sins through Himself, He sat down on the right of the Majesty on high, Psa. 110:1

One day, we'll all be called to give an account before that throne, and we know that even the idle (inoperative) words spoken now will be assessed there. However, even now consequences follow our words and deeds. Freedom has never been truly without cost, and the liberty of choice granted now to us is not free from consequence. We will now turn to present day applications of our subject.

The World In 2003

Secretary of State Powell at the U.N.:

On February 5, 2003, Colin Powell presented the United Nations Security Council with detailed information supporting Iraq possession and concealment of prohibited weapons of mass destruction in violation of U.N. Resolutions. A portion of the presentation included a recently intercepted conversation between two Iraqi officials which appeared to prove an effort to hide the expression “nerve agents” from all communications. These Iraqi officials were, apparently, careless in communicating this sensitive subject by insecure transmission and consequently, according to western experts, these two men would be killed by Iraq for this breach of security. When United States officials were later interviewed by reporters they reportedly voiced complete

My Kingdom Is Not of This World

indifference to the prospect of the death of these men exposed by the Powell report. “We’re not the least bit saddened by the likelihood of their deaths due to the public release of this intelligence”, was the alleged response by American officials.

The world is on the precipice of a human calamity on a scale never experienced. This earth is no stranger to unspeakable pain, suffering and brutality; but, nothing in our long history can compare to the very real possibility of death, misery and devastation threatening potentially millions right now. And I know that at the very core of every significant issue that is fueling this global fury there is a spiritual essence. The spiritual essence that dwells at the very heart of all issues and disputes is determined by the concealed processing of thought, desire, motivation, imagination, conclusion, perception, and all the invisible interaction of spirit and mind. BUT – ALL THIS OCCURS IN FRONT OF THE MESSIAH'S THRONE! It is not completely accurate to say that a man decides in Canada, thinks in France, desires in Iraq, feels in Israel, is motivated in a refugee camp. All this may be true, but it is not complete. He/She is literally experiencing all these things within the realm of the kingdom of Jesus, the Messiah, because He has authority (the right of rule) over all these things. We do them before His Throne.

Since this is true, I am saddened to hear of American Officials who may THINK that the death of pawns of a cruel tyrant is nothing to cause them concern. Sometimes military force is necessary to combat some evil that will grow and imperil many more unless it is stopped. But even then, it remains a grave undertaking that should elicit tears and compassion when considering all those who may be casualties of it. Anyone experienced in law enforcement knows that subjects of a brutal regime from which they are unable to escape or helpless to replace often display support for and cooperation

My Kingdom Is Not of This World

with the very tyrant who oppresses them. This behavior is not unlike that observed in hostages who sometimes speak favorably concerning the villain who has demonstrated absolute control over their lives – the term applied to this phenomenon is Stockholm syndrome.

I use this as an example. One can be right in the need to prosecute a military objective and yet lose all because the attitude of the Interior Life is a transgression against the kingdom of Jesus. Jesus reigns over the realm of Truth – He is Lord and Master of it. No truth exists anywhere on any level outside of His jurisdiction. His expertise is not confined to “religious ideology”; In Him, there is no separation between Church and State. The kingdom of our Lord is already established as Supreme over all matters of right or wrong, good, or evil, moral or immoral, just or unjust. Therefore, no formulation of ideas or consequent expression of those ideas through word or deed can exist, anywhere, outside of His realm of authority. All of this and much more is included in the proclamation of the gospel which must be witnessed to all the nations before the consummation of this Age.

(Joh 18:37 LITV) ... For this *purpose* I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, that I might witness to the Truth. Everyone being of the Truth hears My voice. (Act 10:42 LITV) And He commanded us to proclaim to the people and to witness solemnly that it is He who has been marked out by God *to be Judge of the living and the dead.*

Was Colin Powell justified in releasing the information to the open session of the U.N.? Assuming all the material and sources were credible, yes! Is this present war against terrorist tactics a war against evil? Yes, it is. But Jesus taught us that we should pray to our Father in heaven, “**deliver us from evil (the Evil one)**”, and we cannot effectively

My Kingdom Is Not of This World

obey His directive if we affiliate with evil in the way we think and the manner in which we speak.

(Psa 24:3 KJV) Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?

(Psa 24:4 KJV) He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

(Psa 24:5 KJV) He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

We pray for God's leading and blessing and then void the invocation by rebellious words and deeds which offend against the Messiah's authority. Should calamity follow, our first questions are: Why did God allow this to happen? Where is God in all this? Why would a loving God permit this disaster to befall us?

Consensus Building, The Bully Approach

Just a reminder before we develop this section: we are, right now, processing ideas and making decisions within the jurisdiction of the kingdom of Jesus, the Messiah, who now possesses absolute authority in these matters. Without question, there will be a day of final reckoning before Him, but the notion that we are not accountable until then is false. Defiance toward His sovereignty now in the core of our interior life is inexcusable and an act of rebellion toward a King. Not only will there be consequences later, but we face them now in personal, national, and international affairs.

The dictum attributed to Lord Acton, “**power tends to corrupt and absolute power tends to corrupt absolutely**”, is continually supported by daily events. There is, presently, a growing global resentment toward the government of the United States.

My Kingdom Is Not of This World

President Bush continues to explain the hatred demonstrated by radical groups and some foreign states with the well-worn explanation, “they hate our freedoms”. Well, many would respond to his simplistic dismissal of adversaries in this way, “it's not freedom that we despise, it's the way you use your freedoms that we deplore”. If the bitterness toward the United States was restricted to terrorist or radical groups, then perhaps this presidential analysis would suffice – but it's not! Several allies within Europe and, according to opinion polls, a growing majority of citizens within major European countries, are displaying an acute resentment towards the U.S. and its policies in the world.

(Pro 17:10 KJV) A reproof entereth more into a wise man than a hundred stripes into a fool.

Now this suggestion that unique American power and position in the world may *tend* toward corruption is in no way intended to commend the sources of resentment; but simply to encourage America to reevaluate its stewardship of power and prestige.

The United States of America has been ordained to establish an environment in which the gospel might be honored and from which that embraced gospel should go forth as a witness to the nations. The form of government and the Constitution of the Nation are consistent with service to that great purpose. Foundational to all this is a Heritage that can be traced to authentic Christian faith and practice. However, a spiritual purpose and calling cannot be achieved by carnal laborers; and the carnal influence in both private and public affairs is corrupting the soul of the nation, undermining all efforts to combat an external evil. Evil must always be conquered at home before it can be subdued abroad – it is true individually and nationally.

My Kingdom Is Not of This World

That brings us to bullying. It is not unusual to hear Administration policies explained in terms of “National Interest”. “If we deem it to be in our national interest we will, if not, we will not”, is the oft heard explanation for positions taken. Strong-arm tactics are used to persuade friends to agree with the Administration’s position because, “this is in our national interest”, and then the coercive approach is rhetorically termed “playing hardball”. The consent and approval of weaker and less influential nations is often extracted (if not extorted) under artfully designed pressures and not secured on the basis of free choice. This promotes resentment and ill-will – and who should wonder why? Remember your early school days – the bully was sometimes complied with but always resented.

If one were able to offer counsel to the Administration of the United States at this critical hour, I would present the following:

- I consider myself to be your friend and there is not another nation on the globe that I would prefer to see in the position of – the world's sole Superpower.
- Bring your thoughts, desires, challenges, decisions, policies, and actions under the direct authority of Jesus, the Messiah, recognizing His Lordship in all these matters. Recognize that only one throne is established over the heart and mind and Jesus rules there alone with no rivals.
- Recognize the responsibility of each person to choose, without compulsion, in matters of faith and conscience and respect them individually.

My Kingdom Is Not of This World

- Stop pandering to Islam and no longer enumerate the benefits of this religion. You can respect the individuals who are followers of these ideas without defiling yourself or misleading many by appearing to endorse them.
- No longer ask yourself, “What would Jesus do”? Or “what would Jesus drive”? These questions suppose that Jesus is not here, and if He were here, what would He do? Assure yourself that the kingdom of Jesus surrounds you constantly and that every thought and deed is processed before Him; ask, therefore: What should I do? What should I drive? What should I say?
- Remember that the United Nations is not united. It has never truly been united. Its resolutions are, by design, long on delicately crafted words and short on real substance – always open to private and subjective interpretation because reluctant agreement required it to be so. Division and weakness are built in.
- Love your neighbor as yourself. Don't think simply in terms of your national interest and remember that in God's Earth your neighbor resides in both Bombay and Boston. Treat the hopeless, the widows, the fatherless, and the downtrodden everywhere as if they lived next door, and they will respond.
- The primary battleground in this dangerous world is for the hearts and minds of people. What weapons can be used to win and hold the high ground here? If you wish to preserve freedom and pass on a comfortable world to our grandchildren, you must win the hearts and minds of your enemies. Yes, you must defend yourselves while you do this, but if the primary battleground is lost, continued protection of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness may slip out of reach.

My Kingdom Is Not of This World

- Embrace the kingdom of Jesus and His authority over all the unseen processes of your interior life. Know that He is Lord over your thoughts, concerns, questions, decisions, desires, words, and actions. He will impart a wisdom, grace, favor, love, and vision that will promote peace; and if a military action is required to overcome tyranny and free the oppressed, it will find success.

(Gal 6:7 LITV) Do not be deceived, God is not mocked. For whatever a man may sow, that he also will reap.

Adam Clarke's Commentary offers the following:

God is not mocked - Ye cannot deceive him, and he will not permit you to mock him with pretended instead of real services.

Whatsoever a man soweth - Whatsoever kind of grain a man sows in his field, of that shall he reap; for no other species of grain can proceed from that which is sown. Darnel will not produce wheat, nor wheat, darnel.

Administration or governmental approaches that seek acquiescence by pressure and “hard ball” tactics are sowing as literally as the man who plants in his field; and the law of reaping produces accordingly. Today, February 13, 2003, the United States of America is nervously anticipating a terrorist attack on the homeland. Security is on High Alert with a Code Orange level, second only to the highest category, a code red. Hardware stores are running low on supplies of duct tape and plastic as alarmed citizens attempt to protect themselves from the extreme threat of biological, chemical, radiological, or dirty bombs. Even without any actual attack involving these agents, Americans painfully realize that freedom, as they have known it, has already been lost. Terror is beginning to visit the homeland as never before. All this is the result of an

My Kingdom Is Not of This World

extremely zealous network of Islamic inspired men who have determined to devote ALL they possess to “play hard ball” with the United States in order to persuade America to make choices under pressure and compulsion that she would otherwise not make. Terrorism is not attempting to negotiate changes in American policy; terrorism is determined to dictate that policy. Attacks are focused against two major pillars of Western strength: economy and security. If sufficient pain and damage can be inflicted in these two major areas, America (and with her the rest of Western Influence) will back out of the Arabian Peninsula and the Middle East. The Israeli – Palestinian issues will be resolved by men like Osama BinLaden – and I need not spell out what that would mean. These are the goals of fundamentalist Islam and their most trusted weapon is described by them as “martyrdom”. The Bully Approach is being revisited upon America. Islam (submission) as understood by these zealots requires the use of force to compel all the infidels (Atheists, Christians, and Jews) to bow the knee to their religion and their prophet. They view jihad, not as an inner personal struggle against temptation, but as a divinely justified campaign upon all who oppose their views until their enemies are forced into submission. That is the kind of spirit that resides in the heart of the Terrorism we face!

What Should We Then Do?

Do you remember Jesus saying, “**if My kingdom were of this world then My servants would fight**”? Well, it's not of this world and therefore there is no need of conventional weapons to defend it; but there is another realm in which appropriate weapons must be used.

(2Co 10:3 LITV) For walking about in flesh, we do not war according to flesh;

My Kingdom Is Not of This World

(2Co 10:4 LITV) for the weapons of our warfare *are* not fleshly, but powerful to God to the demolition of strongholds,

(2Co 10:5 LITV) the demolishing of arguments and every high thing lifting up *itself* against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ,

You will notice that it requires more than a good argument to bring a thought into conformity to the kingdom of Jesus; it takes spiritual utensils. There are spiritual (or kingdom – and don't be afraid of the word “kingdom” because someone may have misused it -- it's a scriptural word) weapons used to destroy what should be destroyed, and to bring into conformity what needs to conform. These spiritual weapons focus the authority of Jesus directly upon a target in the realm of human circumstance and command the Truth there. When this happens evil flees because it has no shadow to take cover in, error becomes easy to discern and disown, and former captives may disentangle themselves from that which had ensnared them. Now the mind is free to be filled with thoughts and convictions that obey the kingdom of Jesus; and the song pours forth:

Once I was bound by sin's galling fetters; chained like a slave I struggled in vain. But I received a glorious freedom when Jesus broke my fetters in twain.

The presentation of the gospel message in the way that one would read a story, recall a history, or articulate a persuasive case is powerless to demolish a spiritual stronghold or compel a thought to obey Christ. If the spiritual weapons that we are wielding are

My Kingdom Is Not of This World

powerless against the backslidden western culture with its Christian heritage, how will we fare against Islam should it appears at the door?

(Phi 2:9 LITV) Because of this also God highly exalted Him and gave Him a name above every name,

(Phi 2:10 LITV) that at the name of Jesus "every knee should bow," of heavenly ones, and earthly ones, and ones under *the* earth,

(Phi 2:11 LITV) and "every tongue should confess" that Jesus Christ is "Lord," to *the* glory of God *the* Father. *Isa. 45:23*

The high exaltation of Jesus, the Messiah, has already taken place. His Name is already elevated above every name. His Authority is supreme, now, over inhabitants of heaven, earth, and the underworld. Therefore, it is both right and appropriate that every knee should bow, and every tongue should confess this truth now. But these truths cannot be confessed until the heart and mind are convinced; and the heart and mind cannot be convinced without sufficient revelation; and sufficient revelation requires powerful spiritual weapons and utensils adequate to "focus the authority of Jesus directly upon a target in the realm of human circumstance and command the Truth there". Why do we comfort ourselves in that this scripture (Phi. 2:10) will one day be fulfilled, IF, that day should arrive when it is too late for repentance? Most certainly, that final day will exhibit this great truth, but this certainty is also a vital part of the "gospel of the kingdom" which is to be "witnessed" to the Nations before the END comes.

(Mat 24:14 KJV) And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

My Kingdom Is Not of This World

Amplification would be like this:

This good news of the kingdom (over which Jesus is king, the realm of His authority) shall be proclaimed in all the world in such a way that it will witness (testify to, provide sufficient proof of, demonstrate its reality) unto every nation (without regard to prevailing social, economic, religious or traditional norms); And after all this is completed, THE END WILL COME.

Conclusion

A great deal more could be said to illustrate and amplify the application of the kingdom of heaven – the realm in which Jesus is king. Should we carefully examine events and circumstances with a view to what occupies the core, I believe the evidence would clearly show that a spiritual essence resides there. If that spiritual essence were brought under the Lordship of Jesus and made subject to His kingdom, the manifestations in time and space would be radically altered. What is true in the interior life of an individual is also true in the affairs of a nation. Clearly, the purpose of the Christian Church universal is to manifest in this world the kingdom of heaven – by individually and collectively experiencing the rule of heaven in the Interior Life. When the life inside is expressed to the outside, that is witnessing the gospel of the kingdom. But if the interior of our heart and mind is infected with carnality and we think and live by the dim natural light of a secular world, we have nothing to offer in the name of Jesus – even though we may deceive ourselves by going through the motions. Come before the King and the Spirit of Truth will disclose these things with wonderful illumination.

My Kingdom Is Not of This World

It may be that you are a father or mother of young hearts and minds, and you will be enabled to impart the truth of the Interior Kingdom to them. Rather than simply attempting to steer them from the outside away from danger by emphasizing behavior, the power of our Lord's kingdom on the inside will naturally result in appropriate conduct. Our citizenship is to be in heaven.

(Phi 3:20 LITV) For our citizenship is in Heaven, from where we also wait for a Savior, *the* Lord Jesus Christ,

(Phi 3:21 LITV) who will transform our body of humiliation, for it to be conformed to His body of glory, according to the working of Him to be able even to subject all things under Himself.

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