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*God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.*

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## Ezekiel 34.

(2014)

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The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

***Teach it, don't demand it.***

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## Ezekiel 34.

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### Topics.

- Ezekiel is told to prophecy against the shepherds.
- The people were scattered, because there was no shepherd.
- The LORD holds the shepherds accountable for the sheep.
- The LORD himself will search for his sheep.
- The LORD calls Cyrus his anointed shepherd.
- The LORD will judge between sheep and sheep, rams and male goats.
- The LORD will set up over Israel one shepherd.
- Jesus Christ is the son of David.
- The commonwealth of Israel.
- The glory of the spiritual temple God is building in Christ.

**Introduction to the Book of Ezekiel:** Ezekiel, a prophet and priest, was exiled to Babylon in 597 B.C. His ministry extended over at least twenty-three years. The book opens with his first dramatic vision of the “likeness” of the LORD”. Ezekiel was keenly aware of God’s presence and power in human affairs. He addressed both the exiles and the people left in Judah with messages of warning and judgment, predicting the fall of Jerusalem.

After its fall (586), Ezekiel prophesied of hope and reassurance for the people of Judah, who had then lost the focus of God’s covenant and the temple in Jerusalem. His vision of the valley of dry bones (ch. 37) is a classic picture of God’s ability to breathe new life into those who are spiritually dead. Ezekiel is prophesying about the Jews that did not go into captivity to Babylon, but remained against the word of the LORD in Jerusalem.

**NOTE:** Ezekiel’s message is primarily directed to the people in the land of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem (the two tribes), but often it is difficult to separate the message from Judah and Israel (the ten tribes) because much of what the LORD says can be applied to both Judah and Israel because the two are so intertwined and both nations were guilty of the same gross sins.

**FOR INFORMATION:** concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: “Map Locations and People of the Bible,” and the title: “Bible Dictionary” on Website Menu.

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### Ezekiel is told to Prophecy against the Shepherds.

Ezekiel 34:1-4 ----- <sup>1</sup>The word of the LORD came to me: <sup>2</sup>“Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord GOD: Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? <sup>3</sup>You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep. <sup>4</sup>The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them.

The shepherds of Israel: -

- Where feeding themselves and not those they were called to shepherd.

- Clothed themselves with the best of fabrics.
- Took the best of the food and left the worst for the people.
- Where not strengthening the people spiritually.
- Did not care for the sick or the injured.
- Made no attempt to bring those who had strayed back or to save the lost.
- Ruled over the people with force and harshness.

### **The People were Scattered, because there was No Shepherd.**

Ezekiel 34:5-8 ----- <sup>5</sup>So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd, and they became food for all the wild beasts. <sup>6</sup>My sheep were scattered; they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. My sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with none to search or seek for them. <sup>7</sup>"Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: <sup>8</sup>As I live, declares the Lord GOD, surely because my sheep have become a prey, and my sheep have become food for all the wild beasts, since there was no shepherd, and because my shepherds have not searched for my sheep, but the shepherds have fed themselves, and have not fed my sheep,

Wild beasts literally refer to wild animals (v5, 25, 28) and figuratively and in the context of this chapter shepherds who led the flock astray.

**This literally happened:** Assyria invaded the land of Israel and Babylon destroyed Jerusalem resulting in the people of Israel fleeing to the hills, wandering over mountains dwelling amongst wild animals and being scattered throughout foreign nations. All of this because God's people had no shepherds to guide them, they became a prey for false prophets and false teachers who led them into idol worship and gross wickedness.

**The lesson for shepherds:** know that God will hold shepherds accountable for the destruction of those they have led astray and used for their own selfish gain and glory.

**The lesson for those following shepherds:** listen to everyone, but don't give your power over to anyone, never surrender your mind to another person. Do not allow yourself to make a choice because of someone else's power and control over you always, be responsible for your own belief and faith in God.

### **The LORD holds the Shepherds Accountable for the Sheep.**

Ezekiel 34:9-10 ----- <sup>9</sup>therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: <sup>10</sup>Thus says the Lord GOD, Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require my sheep at their hand and put a stop to their feeding the sheep. No longer shall the shepherds feed themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouths, that they may not be food for them.

**No longer will the sheep be food for the shepherds:** as in the days of Jesus so it was in the days of Ezekiel, the religious leaders were using the people to establish their own kingdom, they loved the power, the glory (fame) the sense of importance and the riches and wealth that came by telling their congregations what they wanted to hear and using them as merchandise for their own gain.

### **The LORD Himself will Search for His Sheep.**

Ezekiel 34:11-16 ----- <sup>11</sup>For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. <sup>12</sup>As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. <sup>13</sup>And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. <sup>14</sup>I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land,

and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. <sup>15</sup>I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD. <sup>16</sup>I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice.

This is a great example of the wonder, beauty and splendour of Bible prophecy. This was initially fulfilled through Cyrus the king of Media Persia, who the LORD called, "His anointed Shepherd." God used Cyrus to conquer the entire nation of Babylon and give the people of Israel written permission to return to their beloved land and re-build Jerusalem and the Temple of God. Multitudes of Jewish families returned from the foreign nations that they had been scattered amongst to their homes, farms and land in Israel.

### **The LORD calls Cyrus His Anointed Shepherd.**

- Thus says the LORD *to his anointed, to Cyrus*, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed (Isaiah 45:1).

God calls Cyrus (the secular king of Persia) His anointed shepherd and Isaiah pictures the LORD holding Cyrus's right hand while he opens all doors that no man can shut while Cyrus subdues all the nations of Babylon (Isaiah 45:1, 28), but, these prophetic words of Ezekiel also echo a future era when God by His Spirit through the LORD Jesus Christ will once again seek out His people who are lost and scattered, because the religious leaders, (i.e. the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes) have also used their position of ministry for their own glory, (sense of importance) power, fame, and used God's people as merchandise for their own gain (riches and wealth).

Jesus said: -

- He answered (a Canaanite woman) "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matthew 15:24).

Luke says of Jesus: -

- The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him (Jesus). He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, <sup>18</sup>"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, <sup>19</sup>to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." <sup>20</sup>And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. <sup>21</sup>And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4:17).

### **The LORD will Judge between Sheep and Sheep, Rams and Male Goats.**

Ezekiel 34:17-22 ----- <sup>17</sup>As for you, my flock, thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and male goats. <sup>18</sup>Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pasture; and to drink of clear water, that you must muddy the rest of the water with your feet? <sup>19</sup>And must my sheep eat what you have trodden with your feet, and drink what you have muddied with your feet? <sup>20</sup>"Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: Behold, I, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. <sup>21</sup>Because you push with side and shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns, till you have scattered them abroad, <sup>22</sup>I will rescue my flock; they shall no longer be a prey. And I will judge between sheep and sheep.

**I judge between sheep and sheep and rams and male goats:** means God will judge, not only the religious leaders and the priests, but also judge the common people who lead people astray and oppress and use others for their own gain. The words, "Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture and drink clear water, that you must tread down your pasture; and muddy the rest of the water," (v18) means the shepherds are not satisfied with what they receive they also want to take from the poor and the less fortunate.

**Must my sheep eat and drink what you have muddied with your feet:** (v18) means the shepherds have embraced corrupt religious practices and false teachings and are corrupting God's people with them.

**God will Judge between the Fat Sheep and the Lean Sheep.**

Means the shepherds have the authority (horns) and by their dominant and corrupt power are scattering the weak and the poor.

**The LORD will set up over Israel one shepherd.**

Ezekiel 34:23-31 ----- <sup>23</sup>And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. <sup>24</sup>And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the LORD; I have spoken. <sup>25</sup>"I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish wild beasts from the land, so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. <sup>26</sup>And I will make them and the places all around my hill a blessing, and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing. <sup>27</sup>And the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase, and they shall be secure in their land. And they shall know that I am the LORD, when I break the bars of their yoke, and deliver them from the hand of those who enslaved them. <sup>28</sup>They shall no more be a prey to the nations, nor shall the beasts of the land devour them. They shall dwell securely, and none shall make them afraid. <sup>29</sup>And I will provide for them renowned plantations so that they shall no more be consumed with hunger in the land, and no longer suffer the reproach of the nations. <sup>30</sup>And they shall know that I am the LORD their God with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are my people, declares the Lord GOD. <sup>31</sup>And you are my sheep, human sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, declares the Lord GOD."

**God will: -**

- Set up over Israel one shepherd, His servant David (v23).
- Be Israel's God (v24) and make a covenant of peace with them (v25).
- Banish wild beasts from the land of Israel (v25) (v28).
- Make the wilderness and the forests a safe place to dwell and sleep in (v25).
- Send down the showers of blessings in their season (v26).
- Make all the places around the LORD'S holy hill a blessing (v26).
- Cause all the trees of the field to yield their fruit, and the earth to yield its increase (v27).
- Break the bars of their yoke, and deliver Israel from the hand of those who enslaved them (v27).
- Provide renowned plantations so Israel will never again be consumed with hunger (v29).

**The shepherd will: -**

- Be prince among God's people (v24).
- Feed the people and be their shepherd (v23).

**The people of Israel will: -**

- Be secure in their land (v27).
- Know that the LORD is their God and that He is with them and they are His people (v27) (v30).

- Never again be a prey to the nations or afraid of them (v28).
- No longer suffer the reproach of the nations (v29).

These prophetic and futuristic promises and blessing were fulfilled (with limitations) at the end of Israel's seventy years in captivity to Babylon. They were set free, to return to their homeland, rebuild their homes, their city Jerusalem and the temple of God. God gave them Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah shepherds who had a heart for God and for the people, multitudes of Jewish families returned to their land and Jerusalem and when the temple was completed a time of peace and prosperity followed throughout their land.

But the LORD'S prophetic blessings and promises for His people are not fully fulfilled until God sets up over Israel one shepherd who will be a prince among God's people (v23-24). This Shepherd is called God's servant David, but the following verses show that the LORD is fulfilling His purpose in David through the Lord Jesus Christ as the following verses show.

- The angel (Gabriel) said to her (Mary), "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup>And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. <sup>32</sup>He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And *the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David*, <sup>33</sup>and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end. (Luke 1:30-33).
- The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, *the son of David*, the son of Abraham ---- NOW GO TO VERSE ---- <sup>21</sup> Mary will bear a son, and call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup>All this took place *to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet*: <sup>23</sup>"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us). (Matt. 1:1-25).

**NOTE:** Immanuel does not mean Jesus is God, but that God's favour and salvation is now with Israel and the world through the Lord Jesus Christ. Since many believe the words, "They shall call his name Immanuel," means Jesus is God and this teaching has such a strong hold on much of traditional Christianity the following will encourage and comfort faithful brothers and sisters in Christ who maybe in some doubt and unsure of what to believe concerning the Father and the Son. The Bible very clearly shows that even if Jesus was God no one has to know this to be saved to eternal life since there is not one verse in the entire Bible that states: -

- We must believe that Jesus is God to be saved.

Nor is there one verse from Genesis to Revelations that says: -

- Whoever believes that Jesus is God will be saved.

In total contrast to this silence there are literally multitudes of Scriptures throughout the pages of the New Testament that very clearly proclaim: -

- We must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved.

And that say: -

- Whoever believes that Jesus is the Son of God will be saved.

Surely if it was important to believe that Jesus was actually God to be saved to eternal life Jesus, the apostles and Paul would have told us at least once in all their teaching concerning salvation, but all we hear from Paul, the apostles and Jesus himself is them saying that we must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved to eternal life. Jesus himself said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

**For further information see the title: -**

- Trinity (The Doctrine of the Trinity) in Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

### **Jesus Christ is the Son of David** (meaning his descendant).

- The crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, "Hosanna to *the Son of David!* Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" (Matt. 21:9).
- But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, "Hosanna to *the Son of David!*" they were indignant, (Matt. 21:15).
- Jesus said, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" They said to him, "*The son of David.*" (Matt. 22:42).
- Jesus said, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup>For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. (John 3:16-17).

These verses show that the prophetic words of Ezekiel rest but for a moment at the completion of the God's temple and the time of Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah and then take up wings that transcends the mind of the New Testament reader at the speed of lighting through time and history to the ultimate fulfilment of Ezekiel's fabulous and glorious prophetic words which is the glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign.

The dead in Christ and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth.

Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish.

The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states: -

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory.

**For further information see titles: -**

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
  - The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.
- In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).
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### **The Commonwealth of Israel.**

It is important to understand that the promised seed of Abraham and David is Christ, all the promises to Israel are now fulfilled in Christ therefore they are not limited to Israel only but extend and embrace all those who belong to Christ because God is now creating one new nation in Christ made up of both Jew and Gentiles. (Gentiles are everyone who is not a Hebrew or Jew) this means that Jews and Gentiles become one new nation in Christ (also called, a new man, a new creation, the church, the body of Christ and the Kingdom of God).

The Apostle Paul said: -

- Remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision (Jews), which is made in the flesh by hands—<sup>12</sup>remember that you (Gentiles) were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the *COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL* and *STRANGERS* to the *COVENANTS* of *PROMISE*, having no hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup>But now in Christ Jesus you (Gentiles) who once were far off (from God) have been brought near by the blood of Christ. <sup>14</sup>For he himself is our (Jews and Gentiles) peace, who has made us both *ONE* and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility <sup>15</sup>by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he (Jesus) might create in himself *ONE NEW MAN* (or Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles), so making peace, <sup>16</sup>and might reconcile us (Jews and Gentiles) both to God in *ONE BODY* through the cross, thereby killing the hostility (between the Jews and Gentiles). <sup>17</sup>And he (Jesus) came and preached peace to you (Gentiles) who were far off (from God) and peace to those who were near (Jews). <sup>18</sup>For through him (Jesus) we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access in *ONE SPIRIT* to the Father. <sup>19</sup>So then you (Gentiles) are *NO LONGER* strangers and aliens, but you are *FELLOW CITIZENS* with the *SAINTS* (the Jews) and members of the *HOUSEHOLD* of God, <sup>20</sup>built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone <sup>21</sup>in whom the *WHOLE STRUCTURE* being joined together (Jews and Gentiles) grows into a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup>In him you (Jews and Gentiles) also are being built together into a *DWELLING PLACE* for *GOD* by the Spirit (Ephes. 2:11-22).

Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the, Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ.

Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles).

In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Christ is the head of this new nation and its Jewish and Gentile citizens are now equal in status before God since in Christ we are all brothers and sisters in the same eternal family that God is now establishing in the Lord Jesus Christ throughout all nations of the world.

### **The practical application of what this means to you: -**

If you belong to Christ, all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel also apply to you. The book of Revelation states: -



- When Christ returns in glory every eye will see him, even those who pierced him and all the tribes of the earth (Rev. 1:7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation (i.e., Jews and Gentiles) and he has made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Rev. 5:9-10).

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### **The Glory of the Spiritual Temple God is Building in Christ.**

Jews and Gentiles are being united together as one body in Christ to be a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Believing Jews and Gentiles are being prepared by the prophets and apostles teachings and by the influence of Christ and the Holy Spirit to become a majestic and glorious sacred temple in which God dwells for all eternity.

When this majestic building is completed there will be nothing so worthy of reverence since God dwells in it; so ancient since the patriarchs and prophets laboured in building it; so solid since love cements it together; so closely united and indivisible since Christ is the corner stone; so exalted since it reaches as high as heaven and to God himself; so full of wisdom since its specifications are the word of God; so full of light since the Holy Spirit dispels every dark corner; so spacious since it is spread over the whole earth; so invincible and indestructible since it is being built by God, by Christ, by the Holy Spirit and by the influence of God's eternal word; so divine since it is a living, vibrant, dynamic temple inhabited by the Holy Spirit and so universal since all its unique stones though spread throughout the world are compacted together in Christ.

God is the master builder of this majestic and glorious temple; Christ is the corner stone; faithful believers are the proper materials; the prophets and apostles are its foundation and the Gospel and love its pillars. Christ is the door and faith is the entrance into it. It is a spiritual building and through, faith and grace this living building is growing into an eternal house fit for the most Holy God to dwell in. Its beauty and radiance will surpass all temples that have ever gone before it since it will be adorned with a vast variety of rich colour made up of Jews and Gentiles of every age, country, sex, and condition: the mightiest of kings, the most renowned lawgivers, the most profound philosophers, the most eminent scholars and all those of whom the world was not worthy have formed this building.

Peter wrote: -

- Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him Will not be put to shame (1 Pet. 2:6).

Every faithful brother and sister in Christ are represented as living stones that God is using to build this spiritual, majestic temple of eternal glory which will be manifested in splendour for all to see when: -

- The Lord himself descends from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ are raised then we who are alive are caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:15-18).

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End.