# Decision Models to Avoid

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Preacher: Pastor Kenoyer

[0:00] Number one, I couldn't help this morning as we were singing to cross-reference the song and the words in my own thinking against Psalm 119.

! It says this, Open thou mine eyes that I might behold wondrous truths of thy law. And so I trust that as you were singing that, you were thinking and praying to yourself, Lord, I just don't want to be going through the motion of singing.
I really want to consciously and deliberately be in prayer that you would open my heart and my ears, my life, that I would hear what you have to say for me.
That was one. The second thing that I thought about, I thought, what a way to set the stage for a pastor to walk to the platform.
I have no business doing anything but speaking what is true. And that's the reason that I began by saying, what did I say to start with?
[1:17] Turn in your Bible. I am so very thankful.

I am so very thankful that my calling and my privilege, my responsibility and the thing that you pray for is that when I preach, that I preach the Word of God.
And that you can hold it in your hand and you can follow along and you can track and reference and understand by the prompting of the Spirit, what is it that we're looking at and what is it that God says here?
So, we're going to look at John chapter 7. Let me read from verse 40 a little bit to kind of set the frame. And then we're going to pray together. And then we're going to open up and study the Word of God together.
When they heard these words, some of the people said, this really is the prophet. Others said, this is the Christ. But some said, is the Christ to come from Galilee?
[2:23] Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was? So, there was a division among the people over him.

Let's pray. Father, our time this morning in prayer is without question something that is not just a habit. It is a confession of our absolute dependency upon you for everything.
For me. And for the enabling of the Spirit in preaching your Word, to preach it with accuracy and with clarity and simplicity and sweetness.
That the hearts of people that love Christ are lifted up to glory in His name and the blessing of salvation. And that those who are here that don't know Christ, would not slip into a Christless and hopeless eternity in hell because they have refused the sweetness of the gospel.
And we plead with you that you would work this morning to make Jesus clear and winsome and draw people to faith.
[3:50] We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. I really don't remember when I first heard it.

But if there's anything you know about me, it's that most everything I've ever said that's reasonable, I repeated from somebody else. There are very few original thoughts that I've had that are anything worth ever saying twice.
Most of the things that come out of my head that I think of on my own happen to be rather skunky.
And so I am a gleaner from every resource that I can think of.
And I remember when I first heard John MacArthur say that the purpose of preaching is to really put people on the spot of saying yes or no. Yes or no to God.

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And so I am conscious and deliberate of that. Not only this morning because this passage is a perfect illustration of it. But I'm under that sense of responsibility and conviction that preaching really is about making the word of God clear so that people say yes, yes, yes, yes.
[5:04] That's what I know God thinks and I'm going to respond in faith. Or, hey, I hear it, but I'm not doing it. Can I tell you something?

Nobody's going to end up in hell. Everybody smile because I'm talking to you. Nobody's going to end up in hell because of ignorance. Do you got that? People make conscious, deliberate decisions to refuse the clear, convincing, persuasive work of God, whether it is in creation or in the declaration of the word.
And that's what we're doing here this morning. And as we are working our way through John, and I thought about taking the time this morning to kind of give you a real quick rundown, and I won't, but I will highlight the fact that as you look through John up to chapter 7, you will find over and over again that in these short little pictures we have of the Savior, in the same frame in which we're given, whether it's Nicodemus or the woman at the well, we have clear instance of individuals making conscious and deliberate decisions.
In essence, saying yes or no. And here we are at the most public declaration that Christ made to point to date of His ministry.
Remember, He came at the last day of the feast and said, hey, listen, in essence, He says, believe on Me, you'll have everlasting life, and you'll receive the Spirit. And in essence, He's saying, listen, I am the one that you believe in and trust in for salvation and for all the blessings that God has promised.
[6:51] Against that reasonable statement that Jesus made, John wants to take the time to have every one of us recognize that what Jesus said was handled and responded to in different ways.

Now, why is that? How many of you do better with examples than you just do with kind of auditory things? I have to confess that, and this is my last remodel.
I've said that before, but we now have heat in the home that Judith and I bought over on Guernsey. We have a hard pipe that is running hot water through the house, and hey, listen to me.
A boiler system is really kind of easy. Once you watch other people do it. And I've been, some of you are smiling because you have no idea what hard pipe is.
Bob, you understand. And so, after I watched the boiler guys doing the boiler system, I hooked up two of them myself. Yes! Now, my point is, hey, we want to see it in real life.
[8:07] And what we're looking at this morning is how people responded to the offer of Christ to be their Savior.

Four different pictures that I want you to see this morning. First of all, we see believing. And very interestingly, picking up there in verse 40, when they heard these words, remember Jesus had said to them, in essence, I am the one who came to be your Savior.
And there were some who responded by believing. When they heard these words, some of the people said, this really is the prophet. Keep your finger there on verse 40 and go back to verse 31 just for a second.
You remember earlier in this very chapter, it says this, yet many of the people believing in Him said, they said, when the Christ appears, will He do more signs than this man has done?
There were a lot of people that recognized that what Jesus was doing was undeniably spectacular, and there was no way to deny the significance of the things that He was doing apart from coming to grips with.
[9:23] He was pointing attention to His person and His ministry and putting them on the spot. And so we look back here in verse 40 and we see that John wants us to see the conclusion of His public ministry and offer, and in essence, He was putting people in that spot where they had to decide, well, who is He?

And their confession was more than just an admission that He was a pretty spectacular miracle worker. And why do I say that?
Look at the two different words there in 40 and 41 with which they identify Christ. They say, number one, He really is the prophet. That is a very, very significant statement.

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And in order to help you understand it, I want you to go back just for a moment. There you are in John. But go back to John 1, verse 21. It is a picture of John the Baptist after he'd had a very significant onset to his ministry.
Remember, a delegation was sent from Jerusalem. They came down to John the Baptist. And there in verse 21, they said, are you the Christ?
[10:37] That was in 20. He said, no, no, no. Well then, are you Elijah? Does anybody know why they would ask him, are you Elijah? Remember how Malachi ends, right?

Talks about Elijah's coming. And they asked him, well, okay, are you kind of the one who's going to come in reference and eventually in relationship to the coming of our Messiah?
Okay, well, you're not that. No, I'm not. Are you the prophet? Are you the prophet? Now, by the way, I remember driving, I forget where it was, Broad Street or somewhere, and running past one of these churches, and it had the pastor identified as prophet, so and so.
You know, yeah, I'm no prophet. I'm a pastor. I'm a shepherd. There is a sense in which I serve in a prophetic role in that I say, I bring forth what God has said, but I'm not up here telling you I got a new word, okay?
It's all settled. It's in the book. Look, this reference to the prophet is one that goes back, and I want you to turn in your Bibles, to Deuteronomy chapter 18.
[11:53] Deuteronomy chapter 18. Now, it is very important. How many of you understand that one of the rules of Bible study is to pay attention to context? Hello?

Nod your head. Sorry. I know you're tracking. I got it. Thank you, Bettina, for nodding. I appreciate that. I appreciate it. Deacon's wives, they got a lot of pressure on them. You know, it's like, nod your head, okay? I appreciate you, Bettina.
I mean that, okay? Deuteronomy 18, we got sidetracked with my little foray there just for a second, but here's the deal. Remember context? Remember context?
We pay attention to context. Here is Moses. Let me read the passage. It says, The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you from your brothers.
It is to him you shall listen. By the way, tonight, we are going to be together for a family gathering, and I am going to be preaching on seeing Christ in the Old Testament.
[12:58] I do not have any intention of covering all of the books, but I'm going to give you an overview. This is one of those passages that we will touch on, and so here is Moses in chapter 18 saying, prophetically, that means he's speaking about something that's going to happen in the future.

He says, The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me. Now, does that mean that the guy would walk around with a stick like Moses and a robe like Moses and kind of be the head of Israel?
That's not really what the reference is to. Here's the setting. God had come to the nation of Israel and he revealed himself on the Mount Sinai, and when he revealed himself in his holiness, they were absolutely terrified.
They were, they were, ah, and they said to Moses, Moses, Moses, would you go talk to him and then you talk to us? By the way, that's called being a mediator.
Do you know what I mean mediator is? Terrifying, awesome, overwhelming, unbelievably glorious and absolutely frightening to the hearts of men and they cried out and said, Moses, would you do us a favor?
[14:14] You kind of stand in between and you be the one who communicates to us and Moses said, yes, yes, yes. God is going to send someone like me and you're going to listen to him.

that's Jesus and throughout the Old Testament that issue of God will send his prophet was something that people longed for.
They hoped for the day that the prophet came. Well, there's a second statement that we find there in John chapter 7 so look at it if you will.
John chapter 7 others said this is the Christ. This is the Christ.
Well, what does the word Christ, we all know that word. We all know that word, Christ. But, and not a big quiz here but just out of curiosity, does it, how many of you know, just nod your head if you

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kind of got a rough idea, how many of you have some comfort that you have an idea of what the word Christ means?
[15:31] I'm seeing some nods. Some of you are sleeping but I mean, I'm not talking about that. Okay. So, here we go. The word Christ means anointed.

Right? Anointed. Well, where do we get that from? Turn in your Bibles. We're going to run at a couple different passages and just to frame this for you, look first of all at Isaiah chapter, I mean, Psalms, we'll go to Psalms first.
Psalm 45 verse 7. I love this. It appears also in the book of Hebrews in relationship to Jesus. Psalm 45 verse 6.
Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness.
Therefore, God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions. Do you know what it's saying? This is Jesus in the Old Testament and saying, God has anointed you.
[16:42] And by the way, what was anointing for? Does anybody know? It was the way in which in the Old Testament individuals were set apart for a particular and special ministry.

God has anointed you. Why? To be our Savior? To be the one who fully and completely reveals to us God the Father?
Another passage, if you will look in Isaiah chapter 11, verse 2. Isaiah chapter 11, verse 2. It says, And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, speaking of Jesus, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, and his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.
And he shall not judge by what his eyes sees or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor and decide with equity for the meek of the earth.
I want you to look also, if you would, at Isaiah chapter 61, verse 1, which is probably one of the preeminent passages in relationship to the coming of the Messiah.
[17:55] And by the way, the Jews were looking for the Messiah and they missed him. But if you would think for with me just for a moment, Jesus made reference to this passage in his own ministry.

Isaiah chapter 61, verse 1, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to those who are bound, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.
Jesus was understood by some in that passage that we are looking at in John chapter 7.
They confessed their faith. They said, listen, we've seen what he has done. We have heard what he has said and we believe he is the prophet that God has sent to be the one who is the mediator between God and man.
[19:02] And he is the one who has been anointed to be our Savior. That's pretty spectacular. And so I want you to recognize that as you listen to this passage this morning and here at the very beginning as John is saying, all right, all right, I want you to realize some people, everybody actually, responds to the truth of who Christ is in different fashion.

The question for you is this, have you boldly let others know you trust in him? Have you done that? Now remember, by this point already, there had been a hardening in the nation of Israel, particularly on the part of religious leaders, and if you were willing to confess that Jesus was the Christ, guess what happened to you?
You got booted. You suffered some informal persecution by this point. Later it became even more hardened. So my question is this, is have you boldly let others know that you trust in Christ?
By the way, when was the last time you did that? I don't know, but fair question, right? How many of you realize that in the course of conversation, at the end of the day, people eventually figure out what our worldview is, what we value, and what makes us tick?
Jesus is the Christ. He's the prophet that God has sent to be the mediator. Well, I want you to look at a second response this morning. There in verse 41 through 44, others said, this is the Christ.

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[20:35] No, no, no, no. I is the Christ to come from Galilee, and I would call this dithering. How many of you know what dithering is? Anybody here know what dithering is? How many of you are perpetual vacillators between decisions?

You know, it's like, well, should I buy this candy bar or that? Not a good question for a diabetic to pose, but, you know, there it is. Right, Seth?
And dithering means never really coming to a decision, but kind of bouncing back and forth. You know, well, the famous phrase for dithering is on the other hand. You can be in a perpetual loop, kind of keep on coming back to the well, well, well, you know, and so here we have them.
You look at this group and there are some who say, he is the Christ. Oh, well, but is the Christ to come from Galilee?
Interestingly enough, the question was kind of an early gotcha statement. How many of you know what a gotcha statement is in politics?
[21:47] Asking questions that you just can't answer without doing something malicious to yourself. Case in point. Now, don't take this personally, but if I were to ask you, have you stopped beating your wife yet?

What's the answer? If you say, no, I've never done, just one word answer. If you say, no, it's like, you haven't? Well, I'm calling the officer, the police.
If you say, yes, what happens to your character? It's like, you mean you've been doing that? Yeah, I can't believe it. There are some kinds of questions that are really designed as gotchas.
And so, when they ask this question about Jesus, well, you know what? Isn't he supposed to be from, you know, they were putting together information without really doing much research.
In fact, you know, here's the truth. these people never really dug for the truth and never brought themselves to a conclusion. Now, here's why I say that. In Israel, at this time, everybody who was Jewish knew what tribe they were.
[23:06] In fact, remember, when Mary was with child and they had to go be registered by, you know, by edict from, what was it, Cyrenius, blah, blah, blah, something like that.

When I tell the Christmas story, we'll get around to that part. But anyway, remember how it played out? What did Joseph know? He had to go to the town of Bethlehem because that's where the registration took care for his tribe.
And everybody knew where they were and it was easy to find out. Stop. If the religious leaders had been able to do research to deny Christ, don't you think they would have checked in on this major issue of where he was from and what his family background was, et cetera, right?
I want you to know that it's not just the 21st century and politicians who have research teams behind the scenes who are trying to dig up dirt on candidates.
It happened before. And I assure you that people were digging at this issue of who Jesus was and when they made this statement, well, you know, Jesus is from Galilee, and, you know, David and Bethlehem and all that, which you see in verse 42, it would have been very, very easy for them to really get to the information if they'd wanted it.
[24:31] How many of you realize that sometimes we don't make decisions and the way we avoid making decisions is we avoid asking hard questions or being around people who will help us with hard questions, right?

I'm reminded a little bit as I remember studying and thinking about this, it reminded me of Elijah's confronting the nation of Israel on Mount Carmel there over in 1 Kings and just kind of stick it in your mind for later on.
1 Kings chapter 18, verse 21, when Elijah had the showdown, he alone and all the fancy, decked out, superbly religious prophets of Baal, remember they had the dance off, you know, and those guys were just going at it and when it's all finished and they were exhausted, you know, kind of Elijah wanders over and says, would you guys pour water on that thing?
And then, you know, anyway, before he started out, he says, why do you halt between two opinions? If God is God, serve him. If Baal is God, serve him. You know, let's cut to the chase. Let's decide. And there are some of you here this morning, truth of the matter is, you keep dithering on the issue of who Jesus is.

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[25:50] Can I tell you that's not wise? There's ample evidence and the purpose of the evidence is to bring you to the spot of saying, he is the Christ, he is the one who God sent to be my Savior and I'm not going to turn my back on him.

Third, there are those who decided against the evidence and that's something people do. You look there, if you will, in verse 44, some of them wanted to arrest him but no one laid hands on him.
I'll kind of give you a little bit of background. Actually, earlier on in the life of Christ, by this point, the Jewish leaders hated him enough that they intended to put him to death.
Now, he had a public and popular following and so, they were concerned with how they would be received and so, they thought the best way to really do Jesus in was to catch him in something that he said.
I am not positive of this but there's a passage in Proverbs 10, verse 19 that we all bear testimony to. Let me kind of recite it for you. It says, when words are many, transgression is not lacking.
[27:04] What does that mean? If you talk long enough, you say something stupid. Let me go further. If you talk long enough, you say something wicked. And so, they were kind of, they knew their own hearts.

I mean, just open the mouth and insert foot. Worse than that, open the mouth and out comes ugly. And they figured out, well, if we listen to Jesus long enough, we're going to catch him at something and when we catch him, it's gotcha.
Well, they sent out police officers, you know, officers of the temple and they said, we want you to kind of lurk around on the sides of wherever Jesus is teaching and we want you to keep track of what he says and when he says something that's wrong, grab him.
How'd that work out? Back they come. Verse 46, put your finger on it. The officers answered, now this is probably a rare illustration of absolute truth in the face of the consequences.
The officers answered, no one ever spoke like this man. That just blows. I wanted to preach a sermon on that one sentence because it just, it's stunning.
[28:20] The most impressive thing about Christ's public ministry was not his miracles. It was his teaching.

So back they come and they say, no one ever spoke like this man. Now by the way, stop just for a minute.
does that mean that Jesus was so intelligent and intellectual that people were kind of awed, you know?
No. Listen, the mark of true genius in communication is making profound truth simple enough for the seventh grader to understand it.
Since some of you are seventh graders, I'll say fifth grade. Okay, but keeping it simple enough that people can get their hands around it is the thing that characterized the ministry of Christ. So, you know, in relationship to this, I kind of struck by here, remember, these are people who denied the evidence and they were desperately hoping that Jesus would say something wrong.
[29:42] They assumed that Jesus was like they were. Now here's something that really blows me away when you stop and think about it. Jesus never said a single word, a single word that was unjust, inaccurate, or ungodly.

One of the things that I pray about more often than I used to is that I won't say things that are wrong. I'm a verbal person.
I was born that way. Probably a couple weeks after I was born, I was talking in full sentences to my chagrin or to my parents' chagrin. Talk, talk, talk, talk, and shut up.
Okay, so here's Jesus never said a wrong thing. Wow! Think with me just for a moment to James 3, verse 2, and I'll just recite it.
For we all stumble in many ways, and if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man. And that's our Jesus. Isn't that right?
[30:49] Can you see him there? Everything he ever said was perfect, and people were hanging on his word hoping to crucify him, and he never blew it. I want to be like him.

I want you to look at one more case before we come to deal with the issue of your heart.
Nicodemus is pretty spectacular in the midst of this. You find here that Nicodemus in verse 50, who

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had gone to him before and who was one of them, said he was one of the Sanhedrin.
He says, hold it, guys. We're all about the law. We know the law. We are the specialists. He says, does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?
Now, you probably want to say, okay, well, Nicodemus gets a pass. You see, they'd already decided that Jesus was guilty, and they were ready to kill him, and here's Nicodemus standing up and saying, hold it, hold it, hold it.
But remember, remember, if you were to go back to John chapter 3, verse 2, Nicodemus had already been through this process. He'd come to Jesus in chapter 3, verse 2, and here's what he said, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with them.
[32:17] Nicodemus had information, but just like the other group that was willing to kind of dither and vacillate back and forth, Nicodemus was unwilling in practical terms to pull the trigger.

So, what will you do? That's the most important issue this morning. I want you to understand what I said at the very beginning is undeniably true. The purpose of biblical preaching is to put people, every time they hear, to put people on the spot of saying yes or no to God.
God's speaking to you this morning. And here's what he says, he says, Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and there are some of you sitting here this morning that do not know Christ, and you know that you don't know Christ.
I think about the passage in 2 Corinthians where Paul says this, knowing therefore the terror of the Lord we persuade men. Do you know what that means?
By the way, I don't persuade with intellect or exceptional genius. He is just talking about a passionate, winsome appeal that those who are sitting here today that do not know Christ would come to faith.
[33:44] Here's what you need to know. God is holy and will judge sin. We stand justly condemned before a holy God, and we are given an opportunity to respond to the free gift that God gave to us of His only begotten Son who came to this earth and took upon Himself the form and flesh of a man to be the perfect sacrifice and substitute for my sins, for your sins.

And when Jesus stood up at the last great day of the feast, and when Jesus spoke to the woman at the well, in essence, He was saying the same thing that comes to you this morning in the teaching of the Word of God saying this, you are desperate in your sins and need Christ as your Savior, will you say yes?
Will you humble yourself? Will you admit that the evidence is undeniable and you need Christ alone?
So, that's the decision for the unbeliever. Do you follow that? And there are some of you here today that need Jesus. But how does it relate to us as believers?
That's practical because most of you here are believers, right? Here's your job. You're the yes or no crowd. You're called to do the same thing in essence that I'm called to do.
[35:30] Isn't that right? Hello? Am I right? Your lives are all about being in the front lines of helping people see Jesus is the Savior and bringing them by grace and pleading with them to come to grips with the need of their soul.

Is that why you draw breath? Why is it that through John we keep on having these little pictures where we find out who Jesus is and then so what are you going to do with it?
So what are you going to do with it? So what are you going to do with it, right? Woman at the well? Wherever it is, John 6, John 7, it's putting you on the spot of either trusting in Jesus or being an instrument to help people come to faith.
So here's what I would ask and I close with this. if this is the recurring theme of John, who is Jesus and what are you going to do with him?
There are those here this morning that need Christ and I would plead with you, don't walk out those doors saying no. That will have eternal consequences that is beyond imagination.
[36:55] and for you who have come to faith, line your life up with that very singular affection and ambition that you by his grace having been drawn from darkness into light are an ambassador to let other people know who he is and why he came.

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let me tell you something. When it's all said and done, when your life is at its end, what you have done with the sweetness of the gospel is going to stand out as preeminently important.
And I would plead with you to decide. yes. Knowing Jesus as my Savior, I am going to live my life with a passion to lift up Jesus for the glory of the cross.
Let's close in prayer. Father God, this morning as we take the scriptures in hand, we understand that you've given us a picture of your Son.
You've given us a picture of your Son first for those who are here that do not know Jesus, that this morning their hearts would be drawn to see the hopelessness of their condition and cry out upon Christ as Savior.
[38:24] You've given us also who are believers a picture of your Son that we with ambition and affection, delighting in the privilege we have of being delivered from darkness into life, would live our lives with a more conscious and deliberate passion to see Jesus lifted up.

That we would do more than just sing about Him. That the way we live our lives would reflect His glory. And the things we say when you open the door and give us the opportunity would draw wounded and hurting people to understand that Jesus came into the world to be the Savior of all who call upon Him.
We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Let's stand together as we sing. And as we're singing this morning, let me tell you one of the things that goes with preaching and talking about putting people on the spot is that sometimes along with that comes the issue of going ahead and going on public record.
And I would encourage you if you are here this morning and the Spirit of God is saying, hey listen, this is what you need to do. Some of you may need to say, I need Christ as my Savior and I'm humble enough that I'm going to let others know that.
I'm going to cry out to Him to be my Savior now. You do that as we're singing this song. It may be that He's calling to be part of our fellowship here and you need to come forward and say, this is where God wants me, this is where He wants me to connect and serve and be part of a team that lifts up Jesus.
[39:59] There may be some of you here today that need counsel and prayer and there's a brokenness in your heart that you can't solve and you want others to pray with you. You come forward as we sing this song in closing.

Amen. So sweet to trust in Jesus just to take Him at His word.
Why are you coming forward, hon? I want to be baptized. Amen. Do you know Jesus as your Savior? Yes. I'm going to... He'll be baptized. Thank you.
Thank you.
Thank you.
[42:14] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. There in verse 40 and 41.
When they heard these words, some of the people said, this really is the prophet. Others said, this is the Christ. Thank you.
Thank you.

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