

Genesis in Biblical Perspective: The Gospel of Christ from Genesis – The Blessings and Benefits of Finishing Strong

Genesis 24

By [Dr. Harry Reeder III](#)

We are in Genesis 24 and this is a transitional chapter from Abraham to Isaac, the second of the patriarchs. We have an extended text in this study but all of God's Word is inspired and profitable. I believe God has some special things for us to learn from this passage in this study. We will start by reading the first nine verses of Genesis 24 for this is God's Word, it's the truth. Genesis 24:1–9 says

[1] Now Abraham was old, well advanced in years. And the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. [2] And Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, who had charge of all that he had, "Put your hand under my thigh, [3] that I may make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell, [4] but will go to my country and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son Isaac." [5] The servant said to him, "Perhaps the woman may not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I then take your son back to the land from which you came?" [6] Abraham said to him, "See to it that you do not take my son back there. [7] The LORD, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my kindred, and who spoke to me and swore to me, 'To your offspring I will give this land,' he will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there. [8] But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from this oath of mine; only you must not take my son back there." [9] So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master and swore to him concerning this matter. The grass withers, the flower fades, the Word of our God abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

In 1980 I went to Florida for my first pastorate. My three children were all in the elementary ages and I thought I was going to get to play a lot of golf in Miami. It didn't work out that way. I actually inherited a church in which there were 14 men and not one of them played golf. I bemoaned the fact from the pulpit one day and one of the deacons came up to me and said "I'll take you to the golf course and play but I don't have any golf bats. Can I borrow some golf bats from you?" I knew that was going to be a long afternoon to have to get some golf bats. So I

tried to think of some other ways to get some exercise with my children being at the age that they were and so I decided to take up jogging.

Running was something I did in sports when I didn't do well for it was a way they punished you but somehow I decided on jogging 30 to 45 minutes a day. I decided I would try my hand at running a marathon and my children got involved in it at the same time. My two daughters would see me coming in and say "Dad can we run with you?" When doing a marathon I was doing some distance running and my wife would bring my daughters when I would get to the last mile and they would run the rest of the way with me. My daughters are pretty competitive so they would negotiate of how much of a head start I would give them to see if they could beat me and it wasn't too long after that where they started giving me the head start. My dad was into sports as I was growing up as well but he wasn't into this "let the kids win" kind of thing. He was "beat them" and let them learn to deal with defeat for that was my dad's approach so I kind of incorporated that into my parenting especially when we'd negotiate their head start.

So we always worked on this negotiation of a head start, but in life I'll bet that you don't try to minimize the head start you want to give them in life, do you? What does it mean to give your children a head start? We have a lengthy passage of Scripture in front of us and there are three passages of Scripture that I shake in my boots to preach and this is one of them. This is the longest chapter in the book of Genesis for it is the longest narrative of an episode in the lives of the patriarchs but this text really began to take on something for me when I noticed something in the text. Abraham is finishing strong but he's not perfect for he is a sinner saved by grace and the Bible has been very honest about that. This is the transitional text where we're moving from Abraham to Isaac, Sarah to Rebekah, for this is the hand-off chapter and there is a message that is coming through. The message is when you finish strong you give the next generation a head start.

Finishing strong to begin with is a blessing because you leave behind a legacy that tells others that God's grace is sufficient. The legacy of heroes is the fact that they were heroes of the faith. God's grace took them, saved them, changed them, transformed them and they handed off but here we see that when you finish strong you leave a testimony and more than that you're propelling your children by giving them a head start. You are giving those young people that are watching you, the children you are raising, the people that are working with you, the next generation a head start. When you finish strong and your last mile is your best mile then you give the next generation a head start.

Let's take a look at the text. I have divided up the text into three parts. The first part is Abraham's charge to the head of his household, a servant who was in charge of the household. This is the oldest one in the household and he gives him a charge. We find out in the text here that Abraham is old. His wife has died. He has a son approaching 40 years of age. He is at the end of his life and it says

that Abraham was blessed in all things. He was blessed when he was called out of the land of the Chaldeans, when he came to the Promised Land, when he went out and defeated five kings to rescue four kings, when he was given wells to drink from, when he built five altars to worship the Lord and when he lied about his wife on two different occasions but he was blessed because those whom the Lord loves He disciplines. God disciplined him, brought him back, taught him and dealt with him. He is a man who was blessed in all things and the love of God has sustained him.

As Abraham gets to the end of his life, it's time to give his son the head start and the issue is the matter of a marriage. So he gives his servant a charge and there is a euphemism there as he places his hand under his thigh. It is a moment of absolute commitment where this servant is committed on the basis of life to go and get Isaac a wife. Abraham told his servant three things. The first one was negative and that was for him not to take a wife from the Canaanites. The second thing was to get his son a wife from Abraham's people, from his kindred. The third one is also negative and it was for him not to take his son from this land to get that wife. This is comparable to what the Bible teaches us in the New Testament that is the duty of Christians to marry within the covenant, to marry in the Lord. Don't let me son leave this land where God has called us. I left this land one time and got into trouble so don't let him leave it again. Leave him right here.

The servant asks for clarification, "What if I go there and find a woman but she won't come back with me?" Abraham says "Then you'll be free of the charge." Abraham is building his whole charge to this servant to go get this wife based upon the truth of God's Word. Abraham is not dreaming this up. The text says God made Abraham a promise found in Genesis 24:7 which is '*To your offspring I will give this land.*' He has been promised an offspring that will be like the sand of the seashore or like the stars of the sky and he only has one child. So that means God is not through yet. If God is not through yet then through this Isaac will come this enumerable host that will inherit this land. You can see Abraham's logic working because he is thinking "Then God has a wife for my son." If He is going to give his son this enumerable seed and this land then that means don't leave the land. Stay in the land, God's going to give the wife, now go get the wife that God leads you to. So Abraham is reasoning from the Word of God. So the servant leaves to go get the wife. Let's follow the servant from the text for there is a reason why it is written the way it is. Genesis 24:10–60 says

[10] Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and departed, taking all sorts of choice gifts from his master (Abraham); and he arose and went to Mesopotamia (means the land between two rivers – the Tigris and Euphrates, which is now Iraq and parts of Iran.) to the city of Nahor (named after Abraham's brother, Nahor). [11] And he made the camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water at the time of evening, the time when women go out to draw water. [12] And he said, "O LORD, God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today and show

steadfast love to my master Abraham. [13] Behold, I am standing by the spring of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. [14] Let the young woman to whom I shall say, 'Please let down your jar that I may drink,' and who shall say, 'Drink, and I will water your camels'—let her be the one whom you have appointed for your servant Isaac. By this I shall know that you have shown steadfast love to my master."

[15] Before he had finished speaking, behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out with her water jar on her shoulder. [16] The young woman was very attractive in appearance, a maiden whom no man had known. She went down to the spring and filled her jar and came up. [17] Then the servant ran to meet her and said, "Please give me a little water to drink from your jar." [18] She said, "Drink, my lord." And she quickly let down her jar upon her hand and gave him a drink. [19] When she had finished giving him a drink, she said, "I will draw water for your camels also, until they have finished drinking." [20] So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough and ran again to the well to draw water, and she drew for all his camels. [21] The man gazed at her in silence to learn whether the LORD had prospered his journey or not.

[22] When the camels had finished drinking, the man took a gold ring weighing a half shekel, and two bracelets for her arms weighing ten gold shekels, [23] and said, "Please tell me whose daughter you are. Is there room in your father's house for us to spend the night?" [24] She said to him, "I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor." [25] She added, "We have plenty of both straw and fodder, and room to spend the night." [26] The man bowed his head and worshiped the LORD [27] and said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his steadfast love and his faithfulness toward my master. As for me, the LORD has led me in the way to the house of my master's kinsmen." [28] Then the young woman ran and told her mother's household about these things.

[29] Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban. Laban ran out toward the man, to the spring. [30] As soon as he saw the ring and the bracelets on his sister's arms, and heard the words of Rebekah his sister, "Thus the man spoke to me," he went to the man. And behold, he was standing by the camels at the spring. [31] He said, "Come in, O blessed of the LORD. Why do you stand outside? For I have prepared the house and a place for the camels." [32] So the man came to the house and unharnessed the camels, and gave straw and fodder to the camels, and there was water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him. [33] Then food was set before him to eat. But he said, "I will not eat until I have said what I have to say." He said, "Speak on."

[34] So he said, "I am Abraham's servant. [35] The LORD has greatly blessed my master, and he has become great. He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male servants and female servants, camels and donkeys. [36] And Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master when she was old, and to him he has given all that he has. [37] My master made me swear, saying, 'You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell, [38] but you shall go to my father's house and to my clan and take a wife for my son.' [39] I said to my master, 'Perhaps the woman will not follow me.' [40] But he said to me, 'The LORD, before whom I have walked, will send his angel with you and prosper your way. You shall take a wife for my son from my clan and from my father's house. [41] Then you will be free from my oath, when you come to my clan. And if they will not give her to you, you will be free from my oath.'

[42] "I came today to the spring and said, 'O LORD, the God of my master Abraham, if now you are prospering the way that I go, [43] behold, I am standing by the spring of water. Let the virgin who comes out to draw water, to whom I shall say, "Please give me a little water from your jar to drink," [44] and who will say to me, "Drink, and I will draw for your camels also," let her be the woman whom the LORD has appointed for my master's son.'

[45] "Before I had finished speaking in my heart, behold, Rebekah came out with her water jar on her shoulder, and she went down to the spring and drew water. I said to her, 'Please let me drink.' [46] She quickly let down her jar from her shoulder and said, 'Drink, and I will give your camels drink also.' So I drank, and she gave the camels drink also. [47] Then I asked her, 'Whose daughter are you?' She said, 'The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore to him.' So I put the ring on her nose and the bracelets on her arms. [48] Then I bowed my head and worshiped the LORD and blessed the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me by the right way to take the daughter of my master's kinsman for his son. [49] Now then, if you are going to show steadfast love and faithfulness to my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or to the left."

[50] Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, "The thing has come from the LORD; we cannot speak to you bad or good. [51] Behold, Rebekah is before you; take her and go, and let her be the wife of your master's son, as the LORD has spoken."

[52] When Abraham's servant heard their words, he bowed himself to the earth before the LORD. [53] And the servant brought out jewelry of silver and of gold, and garments, and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave to

her brother and to her mother costly ornaments. [54] And he and the men who were with him ate and drank, and they spent the night there. When they arose in the morning, he said, "Send me away to my master." [55] Her brother and her mother said, "Let the young woman remain with us a while, at least ten days; after that she may go." [56] But he said to them, "Do not delay me, since the LORD has prospered my way. Send me away that I may go to my master." [57] They said, "Let us call the young woman and ask her." [58] And they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" She said, "I will go." [59] So they sent away Rebekah their sister and her nurse, and Abraham's servant and his men. [60] And they blessed Rebekah and said to her, "Our sister, may you become thousands of ten thousands, and may your offspring possess the gate of those who hate him!"

Before we read the last few verses let's just gather our thoughts around what we have just read. The servant goes and Abraham tells him if they don't give the woman then he is free to go. The servant needed to make sure she wasn't a Canaanite woman and that she was from Abraham's kindred. He also could not allow Isaac to leave the land while he did this. The servant takes with him camels, gold, silver, ornaments and servants. When he gets to the well at Mesopotamia he begins to utter a prayer. By the way we don't have time to cover it but you take this text and compare it to when Jesus comes to a well in John 4 when He says to a woman "Give me a drink of water." There is another whole lesson right there. The servant wanted confirmation of the woman by her giving him a drink when he asks, also putting the water in front of him and offering to give water to his camels that would sustain them. He wanted that to be the woman for Abraham's son.

It was obviously a silent prayer because before he was finished speaking in his heart, up walk Rebekah and we're told three things about her. One she is beautiful. Two she is a virgin, sexually pure. Three we are told she volunteers her hospitality just as the prayer indicated and then she offers water to his camels. Do you know how much water ten camels drink? Wow, what an offer. She not only got them water, she got them water until they finished drinking. The servant gives her a gold nose ring and bracelets. She goes back and sees her brother Laban. Laban sees the gold and bracelets and wants to know who gave it to her. Laban is not the most savory of characters. When Laban finds out this servant is from his grandfather's brother then he realizes they must give him what he is asking. So the servant and his men enjoy more hospitality that night and when he gets up the next morning Laban says "How about waiting ten more days." Who will come back here for a wife? Jacob will come back and he'll end up waiting a lot more than ten days because of Laban.

This servant of Abraham's is no push over. He says "I'm not waiting ten days. I've been given a charge, a task, that I'm going to fulfill for God has prospered me and you don't want to stop me now, do you?" So he overcomes Laban's

elementary scheme that is starting to work here to get his fingers into this possible treasure hunt of his. The servant won't have anything to do with it so they bring Rebekah who is ready to go and she goes with this servant back to this land to meet Isaac, realizing the hand of the Lord is upon them.

In all that I just read it was repeated four times "the servant worshipped" and it was repeated three times that he prayed and the prayer request. When the Bible repeats something there is something being emphasized. The servant worshipped when the Lord showed His steadfast love that reaches to the heavens and from the heavens upon the earth. Now Rebekah meets Isaac and they enter into this covenant of marriage. Genesis 24:61–66 says

[61] Then Rebekah and her young women arose and rode on the camels and followed the man. Thus the servant took Rebekah and went his way. [62] Now Isaac had returned from Beer-lahai-roi (a well that means the Lord will oversee me) and was dwelling in the Negeb. [63] And Isaac went out to meditate in the field toward evening. And he lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, there were camels coming. [64] And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she dismounted from the camel [65] and said to the servant, "Who is that man, walking in the field to meet us?" The servant said, "It is my master." So she took her veil and covered herself. [66] And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. [67] Then Isaac brought her into the tent of Sarah his mother and took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

What an interesting close to this chapter as Rebekah and Isaac marry and occupy the tent of Sarah. Clearly we are moving from Abraham to Isaac. Who are the four patriarchs in the book of Genesis? They are Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. Which one lives the longest? Isaac is the one who lives the longest. He lives 180 years which is five years longer than Abraham. Isaac lives the longest but has the least material set aside to give us information about his life. We had over twelve chapters about Abraham. We have even more than that with Joseph and more than that with Jacob. We only get four for Isaac, starting with this one. Here we have a transition from Abraham to Isaac and from Sarah to Rebekah. Now Abraham sees to it that his son is in place. Abraham is finishing strong.

The research I'm about to give you Howard Hendricks did. He says there are 344 biographical sketches of men and women in your Bible who knew the Lord and of those only 67 finished strong, but one is Abraham. I love the honesty of the Bible. Abraham lied about his wife twice and he had all kinds of problems but God's grace kept him, grew him, kept changing him, and God gave him a land with victory of the Chaldeans. He gave him victory over kings and the ability to rescue his nephew. He gave him the ability to give us a model of intercessory prayer when he intercedes for Sodom and Gomorrah. He gives him an interview with a

pre-incarnate ministry of Christ when he interviewed Melchizedek. He gets four visits from the angel of the Lord. The discipline of the Lord kept him even when he lied twice about Sarah being his wife. The hand of the Lord disciplines those He loves. Abraham is old and has been blessed in all things, even when he has faltered God has kept him.

Now Abraham is at the end and he gives to the next generation a head start and the first person he blesses is his son, Isaac. The first takeaway is that he blesses Isaac his son. Abraham gives him a head start by giving him a good wife. He gives him a Godly marriage. Rebekah is a good wife, within the covenant, not a Canaanite, but a good wife who knows what it means to be blessed of the Lord. She is beautiful in appearance but more than that she is beautiful in her soul for she has kept herself sexually pure. She is a maiden, meaning a virgin. No man has known her. She is also a woman of ministry. Look at her hospitality. She gives a man a drink and then gives ten camels all they need. What a heart for ministry. She opens up her home. She is a woman of faith and when it came time to leave she said "I will go." She will leave all to cleave to the one whom the Lord has appointed, Isaac.

Isaac is a blessed son. His father's ministry has set before him the head start of a good marriage that is in the Lord. It is a marriage that is within the covenant, with a Godly wife. An excellent wife who can find? You don't find them. They have to be made and given to you. Abraham leads Isaac to find this wife and God makes this bride, Rebekah for Isaac. She is a woman of God, with a ministry heart, pure, has faith, obedient, confident, trust and Isaac has a marriage in the Lord. Now we have before him a father who believed the Word of God. God said 'My offspring shall have this land' so I know my God will fulfill His Word. He'll give my son a wife, He'll give us this land so I'll trust and obey. There is no greater heritage than to give to your children that you trust God and His Word and obey, because of the grace of the God who has saved you. His steadfast love has propelled you now you propel your children.

Can you remember things when you're a year old? You must be able to remember some things because I can remember this. My dad would take me and put me up on the refrigerator, and then he'd back off and say "Jump!" I would jump. You might think that just means you're an idiot now and you were an idiot then. My dad was there and he held me in his arms. My dad did not drop me and I just assumed it would continue to be true. I trusted him, I obeyed him and I jumped. We quit that when I was at the age of 18 for I lost the trust in him at that point, but that is something I'd do as a kid – trust and obey.

Five times in the text it said 'Your steadfast love is forever' and Isaac has been blessed because his father in the midst of securing a marriage, showed him what it means to trust and obey. God has a steadfast love that lasts forever. One other thing my dad used to do was take me to high school baseball games trying to generate my interest in it and the one I enjoyed the most was the Shrine Bowl

because my dad used to play in the Shrine bowl. My dad would get to come in free because he used to play in it. The crowds were so big and as a little kid I couldn't see anything. My dad would put me up on his shoulders and then I had the best seat in the house.

Dads and moms, there is your calling – that your children, by God's grace and for His glory will be put up on your shoulders to have a clear view of life. Cell phones and cars won't be their life yet it's fine that they have communication and transportation but what will propel your children for a head start in life is a dad and mom who says 'let's look to your marriage, your life, your relationships. I want you to know what it means to walk before the Lord whose steadfast love is ever dependable.'

The second head start is the servant. What are we called in the Bible? We are called servants. We love to be called servants until someone treats us like a servant, but here is a servant. I cannot vouch for this but I think this servant of Abraham's name has been given to us in Genesis 15. I think his name is Eliezer. Eliezer by custom until Isaac was born was the heir of everything that Abraham owned. Now this Eliezer has been replaced by Isaac and yet there is no bitterness. Eliezer goes out to get the best wife that he can for Isaac, the one who has replaced him, in faithfulness to Abraham.

Eliezer is like an Old Testament Barnabas. Barnabas was always encouraging and taking care of people. Where did Eliezer learn that? He learned it by watching the grace of God in the life of his master, Abraham who was evidence of walking before the Lord and His steadfast love. So Eliezer is blessed and because he is blessed then he becomes a blessing to Isaac. He doesn't take the charge from Abraham and think 'how can I minimize this to get my freedom quickly.' No he sat and thought about it. He

wanted it to be the right woman and he is not asking God for a sign for the right woman. He is saying to God in prayer "Let it be a woman who has a heart to give for that's the woman I want for Isaac." He doesn't elevate the beauty of appearance but the goodly and Godly wife who will sacrifice herself and open herself up because of her love of a wayward stranger.

So men, dare I ask you who yet not have that goodly wife that the Lord would bring in your life, what are you looking for? Is it a woman of faith, of purity, with a servant's heart? That is what this servant secured for Isaac. She was a Godly wife, with a servant's heart.

Here is a last thought I want to share with you from the text. Where is Jesus in this text? Jesus is working behind this. It's His Providence where all of this is at work. What was the last major event we saw in the life of Isaac? Abraham took his only son and went up on a mount which one day would become a temple, in which Jesus would one day come to and sacrifice for our sins. Abraham went up

that mount to do the command of the Lord which was to sacrifice Isaac but when he went to sacrifice him a ram was in the thicket so Isaac was spared and the ram died. In the Old and New Testament the Bible tells us that is a type of Christ. Isaac becomes an example of Christ in that Isaac is then symbolically sacrificed. He is given back as a resurrection and then he ascends back into the position of being Abraham's son and the heir of all things. So that becomes a type of Christ.

Isaac also becomes a type of us. As he is there on that altar a lamb takes his place so we are free because the Lamb of God took our place. One day Jesus will go to that same place and the Father will give His Son. There will not be a lamb to take His place. He is the Lamb and He will be crucified. He will be risen and ascend to heaven. Then the Father will send out the Servant, the Holy Spirit who will prepare a bride to be brought to His Son. You are Rebekah for you are the bride for the One greater than Isaac. You are the one to be chased. I won't give myself to another for I belong to the Lord.

We are a church that confesses Christ and we are the bride of the Lord. We want to be beautiful, adorned with the Gospel of grace. I love the privileges to do marriages and I have two favorite moments in a marriage. One is when the couple kisses. I love to count the seconds of how long it lasts. It's a really interesting moment for me to watch how different people handle that but my favorite moment is when the procession is over and the director closes the door in the back while we're all here in the church waiting. Then as the march begins to play the doors swing open and out steps the bride. You know, there are some ugly people in this world but I have never seen an ugly bride. As the bride steps out I love to look at the groom because I can just hear what he is thinking and that's "I do, I do, I do!" I love that moment.

You are Rebekah and we want to be adorned for the Lord. We want to be pure before the Lord by His grace. When we sin we have a confession and we're freely forgiven but we don't want to embrace sin, we want to embrace our Groom, the Lord. There is coming a day when the doors of eternity are going to swing open and Jesus the Groom will rejoice as He from His death and resurrection receives the bride that His Servant, the Holy Spirit is bringing to Him and He will run to meet her. We will be loved of Him forever.

This text is so rich! Here is a marriage, a covenant marriage, within the Lord. We see what one looks for in a wife. What do you look for in a husband? Ladies, look for a husband that will run to meet you and love you. You look for one who will lay down his life to run to meet you and love you. It's not the things of this world that make a man and it's not the world that makes a man. It's the presence of the living God who makes a man by His grace who will run to you and love you. Men, you look for that woman who is nurtured by the world, who loves to be that suitable helpmate and come along side to open up life.

This text includes the doctrine of Divine Providence. The doctrine of Divine Providence isn't an excuse for no action. This servant believes in the Providence of God. He says to God "You bring the wife, You who have been faithful You be faithful and bring the wife for this man" but that doesn't stop him from praying or going or speaking. He is one hundred percent diligent in what He is called to do. He is focused and he won't be turned away from it yet he is dependent not upon what he is doing but upon the Lord who will provide the wife. Dependence upon God's Providence doesn't cause laziness, but diligence is not what we depend on. We depend upon the Lord. These lessons are so rich. Don't you love the fact that God's not rolling dice when it comes to your life? Our God is sovereign all the way down to wells, water, camels, spouses and life. He is intricately involved in the lives of His people, so we live. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together. Thank You for the privilege to be in Your Word, this marvelous text of Scripture. Lord, if there are any reading this that have not come to You as their Lord and Savior, would You this day bring them? I invite you to Christ. This Savior loves you and is ready to adorn you. This Savior is ready to embrace you forever and He has run to love you at Calvary. Come out from everything and put your trust in Jesus Christ. Dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, when we finish strong we send servants, sons, children and others with a head start into life. God, do a work in us for the glory of Jesus in whose Name I pray, Amen.

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