

God is Creating Spiritual Character in Us

(Sabbath During Unleavened Bread)
Fred R. Coulter—April 7, 2007

Greetings, brethren! Welcome to the Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread! It's really quite a situation for us with the, the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread. As we're going to see, that it is a whole, complete unit for us.

Beginning with the Passover: Christ died for our sins. Sacrificed for the sins of the world. His one sacrifice takes away all sin **forever** for those who repent.

Then we have the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The first day begins with the Night Much to be Observed, and that's when the children of Israel left Egypt. But it also is the day, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which God told Moses to tell the children of Israel **to remember**, because that was a day of *dedication of the firstborn*, because of slaying of the firstborn of the children of Egyptians and sparing the firstborn of the children of Israel.

Now we come to the Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This year it's different than the sequence when you have the Passover in the middle of the week, where then there are three days and three nights up to the end of the Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Let's concentrate on a couple of other things and the meaning and the whole package for us concerning the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Let's come to Rom. 8, a very important chapter because it talks about the **operation of the Spirit of God**. What we're going to see today is that God, through His Spirit, and with our full knowledgeable cooperation, is re-creating in us that spiritual character that comes from Him. Let's see how He does this.

Romans 8:1. "Consequently, *there is* now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who are not walking according to *the flesh*, but according to *the Spirit*."

That tells us an awful lot. Not walking according to the flesh is that you're not living your life the way that *you think* is best, the way that *you feel* is best; rather you are living your life *according to the commandments of God, the laws of God as led by the Spirit of God!* God is dealing with us and is *forming in us that spiritual character*. In order to do that, there has to be an elimination of sin. Sin is eliminated first by repentance, and God wipes the

slate clean. Then He begins dealing with us in a special way, and we have our part.

This is called 'the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.' Another thing that you could put down there is that what we are attending, what we are doing, is not a religion, it is not a movement! You are attending the Sabbath and Holy Days, and with constant prayer and Bible study, you are registered not only in the Book of Life, but in the University of *Eternal Life*, because **God is teaching you! God is leading you!**

That's the whole thing that's important. That's why it's so necessary for us to understand. Always remember that **you have direct connection between you and God the Father through Jesus Christ**, and **no man** should ever place himself in between.

"...but according to *the Spirit...*" (v 1). That means you're walking:

- in the laws of God
- the commandments of God
- led by the Spirit

in the Spirit of the law, not just in the letter. You are being *molded into perfect character*. Of course, that perfection of character will be finalized at the resurrection.

If you're baptized and you're still walking according to the flesh, *you're not growing in grace and knowledge*. The whole purpose of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is to get rid of sin. You have you're part, God has His part, and that is why there is no condemnation, because you are **under the grace of God!**

Here's what has happened, v 2: "Because the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has delivered me from the law of sin and death"—which means that **without the Spirit of God**:

- you cannot please God
- you cannot keep the commandments of God
- you cannot have a relationship with God

The *law of sin and death* motivates and leads your life. Satan the devil is right there leading, guiding and directing all of those who walk according to the flesh. In one way or another, one degree or another, and that people choose *his way*.

Verse 3: “For what was impossible for the Law to do...”

This is referring to the Old Covenant, not the laws of God, because the laws of God convert the mind, change the heart. They’re to be written in our heart and our mind, so this has nothing to do with keeping the Law in the Spirit, motivated by the Spirit. But this has to do with the Old Covenant. Read the Old Testament and what do you see?

- sin, sin, sin
- other gods
- self-will
- going against God
- depravity
- exile
- captivity
- punishment

Why? “...in that it was weak through the flesh...” (v 3).

In other words, since God did not give them the Holy Spirit under the covenant that He gave to Israel, they had the weakness of the flesh. There is no way that they could please God. That’s why God said:

Deuteronomy 5:29: “**Oh, that there were such a heart in them that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always...”** God had not given the Holy Spirit to them; only to those whom God had chosen before Christ came.

Romans 8:3: “...God having sent His own Son **in the likeness of sinful flesh**, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.”

He had to have the *law of sin and death* in Him because the Greek there means *in the likeness of sin of flesh*. So, He had to have the *law of sin and death* in Him so He could become the perfect sacrifice. Only God in the flesh could take within Himself the *law and sin and death*, and yet, **never sin by choice!**

Everything that we do is a choice. We need to understand this. **No human being, anywhere in the world, at any time, is free from God!** Think on that!

- God created us
- God gave us life to all
- He gives food to all
- He owns the earth
- He gives all those things to support physical life—and if you don’t breathe you’re dead

Now, if you’re a sinner, you still can’t get away from God because there are the laws of God and the punishment is automatic, just like the law of gravity, for sin. So, even though you say there’s no God, you are still **not free from God!**

Now we who have the Holy Spirit of God, now that’s a different proposition. Now then, God wants us to overcome the carnal mind, the hostility of the carnal mind, overcome sin and we have been set, we have been delivered from the *law of sin and death*.

It hasn’t been removed from us. We still have things that we need to do. But let’s look at something here very, very important. Remember this about your sins, and tie this together with Heb. 10, that ‘*their sins and their unrighteousness I will remember no more!*’ Tie this in with Psa. 103, ‘*that He removes from us our sins as far as the east is from the west.’ Those are all past sins!*

Let’s see how it’s expressed in Micah 7. This just jumped out at me when I came to:

Micah 7:18: “Who is a God like You, Who pardons iniquity and passes over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage?....”

We are the remnant of the heritage of God. The Church of God, wherever the Churches of God are those who are of **spiritual** Israel. **We’re the remnant of God!**

“...He does not keep His anger forever because He delights in mercy” (v 18).

As I mentioned, concerning the sermon series *Keys to Answered Prayer* and what we have covered there, it also leads up to and adds to what we are covering here during the Feast of Unleavened Bread; that the character of God, the nature of God, is *love and forgiveness!*

Verse 19: “He will turn again; He will have compassion upon us.... [that’s true any time you repent] ...He will subdue our iniquities. Yea, You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.”

Now, this is important for us to understand, because we’re going to see today that there is still a lot of work that we need to do, and God needs to do, to get the sin out of our mind.

Before His throne, He can cast them away. Just like when Balaam went to pronounce the curse against Israel, he got up there and he said of Israel—after all their sins that they had done in the wilderness—‘I see no sin in Israel.’ Think about that in relationship to us. If God gives us, through His mercy, kindness and goodness, in eliminating our sins, now what do we do? That is answered by the

Feast of Unleavened Bread, as we started to cover on the first Holy Day, so we're continuing this now.

Let's see something that is very important for us to understand in our relationship with God; and in our prayers to God; in our repentance; and in our yieldedness to God. Because the longer you have the Holy Spirit, and the more that you overcome sin, and the more that you—every year—keep the Passover and Unleavened Bread and Pentecost and all the rest of the Holy Days of God, ***the more that you grow in grace and knowledge!*** For those of us who teach, it's very important, that as Paul said, preach in season and out of season. There's a reason for doing so:

- so that we can preach and teach the things that are necessary
- so we can grow closer to God

1-John 3 is a very important section for us to understand. One thing God does not want you to be worried about is: Will you make it to the resurrection? The answer is *yes!*

- ***if*** you love God with all your heart, mind, soul and being
- ***if*** you keep His commandments
- ***if*** you keep them in the spirit
- ***if*** you are led by the Spirit of God

Yes, you will make it! That's important for you to understand.

To commit the unpardonable sin is ***a choice that people make in rejecting God!*** So, when we sin, we will see this: God gives us, through our conscience and His Spirit, what you could call a *guilt feeling*. He does it for a special purpose. Let's see why He does it.

1-John 3:13: "My brethren, do not be amazed if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death into life because we love the brethren..... [you can't love the brethren unless you love God *first*] ...The one who does not love *his* brother is dwelling in death" (vs 13-14).

That's why it's so important all the times that Jesus said, 'Forgive that you may be forgiven.'

Verse 15: "Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer... [now we are dealing with what is in our heart and our mind] ...and you know that no murderer has eternal life dwelling within him. **By this very act...** [the act of the forgiveness of our sins] ...we have known the love of God because He laid down His life for us; and we ourselves are to lay down *our* lives for the brethren" (15-16). How do we do that?

- in prayer
- in service
- in tithes
- in offerings
- making sure that we help people
- that we encourage them in every way

Verse 17: "But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his feelings of compassion from him, how can the love of God be dwelling in him?"

The greatest tool for overcoming is *the love of God!* That's the greatest tool!

Verse 18: "My little children, we should not love in word, nor with *our* tongues; rather, *we should love* in deed and in Truth"—toward God and toward the brethren.

Verse 19: "And in this *way* we know that we are of the Truth... [here's what it does]: ...and shall assure our hearts before Him."

When you come to pray before God, and you get on your knees and He's given you that direct access into the Holy of Holies in heaven above:

- He wants you to be assured
- He wants you to know your prayers are heard
- He wants you to know that He loves you
- He wants you to understand that He has called you
- He wants you to understand that He has delivered you from the law of sin and death
- He wants to create His character in you, to prepare you for eternal life

Verse 20: "**That if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knows all things.**"

Why do our hearts condemn us from time-to-time? *Because, when we sin, the Spirit of God in us convicts our conscience* so that ***we can be led to repentance!*** That's how God leads us to repentance. ***In His mercy and graciousness God leads us to repentance!*** That's how He does it!

Remember this, as I've said before, if and when you sin, don't wait to try and make yourself right with God before you go repent, because the only way that you're made right is through Jesus Christ and repentance. It's an oxymoron—or a moryoxon—to try and do it yourself!

Verse 21: "Beloved, if our hearts do not

condemn us, *then* we have confidence toward God. And whatever we may ask we receive from Him **because we keep His commandments and practice those things that are pleasing in His sight**” (vs 21-22).

Let me tell you something, if you have a contrite and humble spirit:

- you're striving to serve God
- you're loving God
- you're loving the brethren
- you're loving your neighbor as yourself

That's pleasing to God! You can please God! Not on your own, not in your own way, but through Christ in you as led by the Holy Spirit.

Verse 23: “And this is His commandment: that we believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and that we love one another, exactly as He gave commandment to us.”

Here's the key, here is what we need to understand, because building Godly character is a joint project **between you and God** as you are led by the Spirit of God and the Word of God. We will see how this is to be done.

Verse 24: “And the one who keeps His commandments is dwelling in Him [Christ], and He in him... [Christ dwelling in us] ...and by this we know that He is dwelling in us: by the Spirit, **which He has given to us**” (v 24).

Now that's the key, important thing to really understand; ***being led by the Spirit of God, and letting God mold you!*** Now, let's first of all, before we get into the molding of God in our life and in our character, see what we are to do. The whole Feast of Unleavened Bread is this:

- put **out** sin, put **in** righteousness
- put **out** carnality, put **in** spirituality
- put **out** hate, put **in** love

Prov. 16 tells us what we are to do, and how we are to do it. Here is a guarantee. I want you to think, all of those of you who have gone through very traumatic experiences. There are many people who have been in combat in war, and they've seen killing, death and wretchedness. People have been through experiences with drugs, sex, perversion, satanism, and all of these things. These have left ***an indelible*** mark upon their mind.

Let's understand something important: Since God has removed these from you spiritually before Him. You have your part to cooperate with God and His Spirit to let those things be erased from your

mind. So, whatever your past experience has been... There have been a lot of people who have been in the Catholic Church and other churches, and Buddhism or where there is rampant sexual abuse and it leaves a mark on the mind. ***Only God can erase that!***

You have your part to do, too. You can't go back and be thinking on those things and let them continue to come up in your mind. You have to *cast down every vain imagination and evil thought that comes into your mind and bring it into captivity to the obedience of Christ!* That's what you have to do with these things. You have to pray and say:

- O God, please erase this from my mind
- O God, please eliminate this horrible trauma that I have been through and give me a new heart and give me a new mind
- Give me peace of mind

That way you don't end up with bitterness and bad memories and so forth!

Proverbs 16:1: “The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, are from the LORD.... [God has given you the ability] ...All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes...” (vs 1-2).

That's why we constantly need the Word of God and the Spirit of God to lead us and direct us so that we don't go our own way in our own eyes. There are a lot of things that people can do that are, that really seem good and nice and right and fine, but they are the ways that lead to death. But, remember this:

“...but the LORD weighs the spirits” (v 2). In other words, ***there's no way that anyone is going to be free from God!*** Absolute impossibility! So here is what you do:

Verse 3: “Commit your works unto the LORD ...” ****What works are we to do?****

- keeping of His commandments
- loving Him
- growing in grace and knowledge

“...and your thoughts shall be established” (v 3).

That's how you have these things erased from your mind. It's a process. Some of the things are in there so deep that it takes an operation of many, many erasings. We'll see a little later on that's called '*the washing of the water by the Word.*'

Verse 6: “By mercy and Truth iniquity is purged...” That's how you get it out of your mind:

- by mercy

- repentance toward God
- forgiveness that God gives you
- and by Truth, the Truth of God's Word
- the Holy Spirit, which Jesus said is 'the Spirit of Truth'

That's **how** you purge iniquity. It's a process. That's why Psa. 19 says it 'converts the mind.'

"...and by the fear of the LORD... [also, the love of God] ...men turn away from evil."

Notice that v 7 picks right up where we left off in 1-John 3: "When a man's ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him."

In other words, He's going to give you peace of mind as well. So, that's important to understand. Now, this is part of **our part**.

Proverbs 3:1: "My son, do not forget my law, but let your heart keep my commandments"—because everything that God has done is for our good:

- His laws
- His commandments
- His statutes
- His judgments
- the spirit of keeping them

Verse 2: "For they shall add length of days, and long life... [eternal life] ...and peace... [we have peace with God] ...to you. Do not let mercy and Truth forsake you... ['by mercy and truth, iniquity is purged' (Prov. 16)] ...bind them around your neck... [you let mercy and Truth purge it, but then you begin putting in] ...write them upon the tablet of your heart" (vs 2-3).

When you do this, you're rewriting, reprogramming your mind. That's what God wants. He wants it to be programmed with the mind of Christ, by the Spirit of God.

Verse 4: "And so you shall find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man."

Here's another aspect that you do, which is an extension of faith. You believe in Jesus Christ. You believe in God. Now what do you do?

Verse 5: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not to your own understanding."

- that's why you need to study the Word of God
- that's why you need to pray to God

- that's why you need to ask God's will to be done in your life

Verse 6: "In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."

- because He's with you
- because He loves you
- because He wants you to develop and form the very character of God

And this is your part in doing it! We'll look at God's part here in a little bit.

We've already covered about having a humble heart, a contrite spirit and this is the one that God looks to. Now, in line with that:

Verse 7: "Do not be wise in your own eyes..." That's quite an important one. No, don't be a smart-aleck, don't be a show-off, just be thankful and grateful.

What we understand and what God has revealed to us is fantastic, that's marvelous. But, let's also understand this: **We still don't know anything as we really do, and we still 'look through a veil darkly.'**

Whatever we have, whatever we do, whatever God has given us, that's marvelous, that's wonderful, because **we have nothing we haven't received**, and give God all the glory and honor.

"...fear the LORD and depart from evil. It shall be health to your navel ... [your inward parts] ...and marrow to your bones... [because marrow is what develops and builds the blood in the system]. ...Honor the LORD with your substance and with the firstfruits of all your increase; and your barns shall be filled with plenty, and your presses shall burst with new wine" (vs 7-10).

Now you can take this same thing here and just realize how spiritually we can apply it, and grow, change and overcome.

Let's expand this out now as to what God is going to do **spiritually**:

Psalm 92:5: "O LORD, how great are Your works..." **They are!**

God has created the heaven and the earth and everything that there is—and all human beings. It's a marvelous and fantastic creation that God has done and, as we know through the sequence of the Holy Days, that God is going to save the vast majority of human beings that choose eternal life in the final analysis.

“...Your thoughts are very deep” (v 5). God says, ‘*My thoughts are not your thoughts, and My ways are not your ways!*’ When we come to God and start going *His* way, and it’s called ‘*the way of the Lord*’... ‘Guide me in the way that I should walk, help me in the way that I should think.’ All of these things all have to do with it and are very important for us to realize and understand.

What is God’s part? Let’s see what God’s part is for us in here.

Psalm 10:17: “LORD, You have heard the desire of the humble...” *He will hear us pray!* Ask God for His Spirit, for His love, for His Truth, for understanding.

“...You will prepare their heart...” (v 17). God is going to prepare our hearts. We’re going to see how God does this, because it is a tremendous thing indeed. It’s the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, through His Holy Spirit that is working in us.

“...You will cause **Your ear to hear**” (v 17). *Let’s see how God does this!* God really has a tremendous plan in doing it.

Ephesians 2:4: “But God, Who is rich in mercy because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in *our* trespasses, has made *us* alive together with Christ. (*For you have been saved by grace.*)” (vs 4-5). *God’s grace is just like a covering of an umbrella, from which comes:*

- His love
- His mercy
- His kindness
- forgiveness
- the giving of the Holy Spirit
- the character of God
- the mind of Christ

Verse 8: “For by grace you have been saved...” That’s what it is in the Greek—and this means *saved from Satan the devil*, who’s the ‘prince of the power of the air’ (Eph. 2:1-3). We’ve been saved from our sins. But we also know that salvation is a process, and salvation is creation.

Paul also said in 1-Cor. 15 & 1 that we are ‘**being saved**’ if we stand in the Gospel. That is: stand in the way of God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. So, it is a process of salvation. There’s initial salvation, there’s a process of salvation and then the finality of salvation is the resurrection when we’re changed from flesh to spirit.

Verse 8: “For by grace you have been saved

through faith, and this *especially* is not of your own selves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, so that no one may boast. **For we are His workmanship...**” (vs 8-10).

I want you to really key in on this verse, because this verse defines what God is doing with us.

- Why did God call you?
- Why did God choose you?
because He personally chose you
- Why did He bring you to the knowledge of the Truth?
- Why were you led of the Holy Spirit?

So that He could work His workmanship in you!

“...we are His workmanship, being created in Christ Jesus...” (v 10).

I want you to recall what I covered on the first Holy day: ‘Create in me a clean heart, O God!’ That’s what David said: *create*. It’s got to be *created* so that you gradually become a new creature in Christ, by being changed through God’s Spirit:

- from carnality to spirituality
- from self will to God’s will
- from being led of Satan the devil to being led of God and the Holy Spirit

We are “...being created in Christ Jesus unto *the good works...*” The works of love, faith, joy, hope, peace and longsuffering. The works of loving God and loving each other *unto good works!*

Read in Rev. 2 & 3, that Jesus said: ‘I’m going to give to everyone according to what his works shall be.’ So if Christ is working you, the Father is working in you, and developing the very character of God, this is how He does it.

“....that God ordained beforehand in order that **we might walk in them**” (v 10).

Eph. 5—here is the operation how, the way, God does it. He wants to take us from being evil and carnal *to being spiritual and Holy*. From having a mind of sin *to having a mind of Christ!* This has to be the operation of God *within* you. We saw the part that we need to do:

- we need to be repentant
- we need to be humble
- we need to be seeking God’s commandments
- We need to be putting them into our heart and mind, and letting God write them into our heart and mind

Here's what God is doing, Ephesians 5:25: "Husbands, love your own wives, in the same way that Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; so that He might **sanctify** it..." (vs 25-26)—meaning **to be made Holy!** The whole process that I'm talking about here is *being made Holy*.

Ephesians 1:4: "According as **He has personally chosen us for Himself...**"—*God the Father!*

Now, I know I have mentioned this, and repeated and repeated this, but sometimes, because we get so down on ourselves and sometimes we feel so alone we need to understand that God *loves* you, God has *called* you; **He has personally done it!** That is to inspire us. God hasn't made any mistakes. He knows your weakness. He knows your sins. He knows the problems you've gone through. Yet, He's chosen you.

"...before *the* foundation of *the* world... [that means He had His plan in order] ...in order that we might be **Holy and blameless before Him in love...** [that He might sanctify it] ...having predestinated us for sonship to Himself through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His own will" (vs 4-5).

To sanctify everyone! What does Paul call us in the New Testament? *We are Holy brethren!*

- that's because God has called us
- He's forgiven us our sins
- He has given us His Spirit
- we are walking in His way

What is another word that is used in the New Testament for us? *We are called saints!* What is a saint? *A saint is someone who has been put into this Holy position before God!*

Ephesians 5:26: "So that He might sanctify it, having cleansed *it...* [purging, cleansing, getting rid of our sins] ... with the washing of the water by the Word."

This is a continual washing, a continual cleaning, a continual giving us of His Spirit. And of course, the Holy Spirit is likened unto water. Because Jesus said, when they receive the Holy Spirit, it's like 'rivers of living water' coming out of His belly. Well, the Holy Spirit coming from God continually *cleanses us, washes us, takes away the sin!*

Now, I want to expand this a little bit further, and say that you need to let the Holy Spirit wash your mind and all of your traumatic, evil experiences that you have had in life. Ask God to

give you the *forgetfulness* of it. Don't let that haunt you! Don't let anything, regardless of how traumatic it may be—loss of loved one, being or seeing someone shot or murdered or blown up, being in war, being kidnapped, being sexually abused, having given yourself over to drugs—and God was merciful to call you out of it.

Let God help you *erase* that out of your mind by '*the washing of the water by the Word.*' When He does, then He can replace it:

- with His Spirit
- with His character
- with His love
- with His kindness
- with His goodness

That's what God wants. This is God's part with '*the washing of the water by the Word.*'

Now, let's see how God is *creating in us*. The thing to understand is that when we read in the Old Testament concerning Israel, let's apply that to the Church. Not only is there a physical application to it, but there's a spiritual application. We were created and born into this world for the very purpose of receiving God's Holy Spirit; for the very purpose of entering into eternal life.

But God has decreed that you must be qualified, by Him—and we're covering the actions that He does, and our actions and our free choice—*so that we can be born into eternal life through the resurrection!* When we are reading these, though they apply to Israel, let's think of them in that light, the spiritual application of it.

Isaiah 43:1: "But now, thus says the LORD Who created you, O Jacob, and He Who formed you, O Israel; '**Fear not...**'"

God is forming and creating in us, *we are His workmanship being created in Christ Jesus!* What God is doing now is completing His creation. First there's the physical, then there's the spiritual. In between there's the growth of character, through the love of God, the Spirit of God and all of these things. So, let's keep all of that in mind. He says: 'I have formed you, O Israel, fear not...' That's why Jesus said, 'Don't be afraid, I have overcome the world. Be of good courage.'

"...**for I have redeemed you...** [think about these words as Jesus is referring to us] ...**I have called you by your name...** [He's going to give us a new name] ...**you are Mine**" (v 1).

Think about that for a minute. *You belong to God the Father and Jesus Christ!* You belong to no man, you belong to the Them.

Verse 2: “When you pass through the waters... [let's just think about being baptized] ...I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you....”

Of course, we know this is a type of trial and test as well. Because when Satan persecutes the church and it's taken, those who go to a place of safety or taken into the wilderness, Satan casts out a flood to try and overcome them, and God helps. So, we have the physical and the spiritual type.

“...When you walk through the fire... [that's your fiery trial as Peter said] ...you shall not be burned...” (v 2)—just like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

“...nor shall the flame kindle on you, for I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I gave Egypt for your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for you” (vs 2-3).

Think about what God has done for us in giving His Son, and in taking us away from the grips of Satan the devil.

I want these words to sink in, especially whenever you have a trial or difficulty that you are going through, think on this. Just like the sermon I refer to many, many times, which is the first one in the *Love series*. **Remember, When All Else Fails, God Loves You!**

Verse 4: “Since you are precious in My sight, you have been honored... [that's through Christ] ...and I have loved you; therefore, I will give men for you, and people for your life.”

Isn't that what God is going to do when Christ returns. Think of what He's going to do to establish the Kingdom of God for us. The dead are going to be from one end of the earth to the other.

Verse 5: “**Fear not: for I am with you...**” **Never forget that!** You have the Spirit of God wherever you are, whatever your circumstances are, whatever you are going through, **God the Father and Jesus Christ are with you!**

“...I will bring your...” (v 5). It talks about bringing back the return of the children of Israel.

Isaiah 44:21: “Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; **for you are My servant; I have formed you...**” This goes clear back, beginning with when you were begotten by your father in your mother's womb, **the Spirit of God formed you** and you were born. God wants to form the **spiritual character** in us, a two-step process.

“...you are My servant; O Israel, you shall not be forgotten by Me” (v 21). Understand that! **God loves you! He's not going to forget you!**

Verse 22: “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions, and, as a cloud, your sins; return to Me; for I have redeemed you.” This is exactly the whole purpose of the Feast of Unleavened Bread!

- to be rekindled
- to renew the New Covenant
- to return to God with all our heart, mind, soul and being
- to get rid of the sin
- to get rid of the carnality
- to put all of those things out of our lives

Because, as the Apostle Paul said, ‘Let us therefore keep the Feast because Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.’ That's what we're doing here. Let God do:

- the changing
- the redeeming
- the forming
- the things that are there

Verse 23: “Sing, O heavens; for the LORD has done it.... [there's going to be an awful lot of singing and rejoicing at the resurrection] ...Shout, O lower parts of the earth. Break out into singing, O mountains, O forest, and every tree in it, for the LORD has redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself in Israel.”

We are spiritual Israel, and He is being glorified in us by **His** power!

Verse 24: “Thus says the LORD your Redeemer, and He Who formed you from the womb, **I am the LORD Who makes all things; Who stretches out the heavens alone; Who spreads abroad the earth by Myself.**”

Notice what He does. He's going to fight our battles for us and that's the theme of the last day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread

Verse 25: “Who brings to nothing the signs of the liars, and makes fools of diviners; Who turns the wise backward, and makes their knowledge foolish; Who makes the word of His servant sure, and makes good the counsel of His messengers; Who says to Jerusalem, ‘She shall have people’...” (vs 25-26).

That's going to be one of the names that's going to be put on us by Christ.

“...and to the cities of Judah, ‘You shall be

built,’ and I will raise up the waste places of it; Who says to the deep, ‘Be dry, and I will dry up your rivers’” (vs 26–27). Then he talks about the type of it being Cyrus.

Isa. 3:46—This is God’s part in what He is doing for us so that we respond to Him. We’re going to see it as a joint effort. We have our part/God has His part; it works together. That’s why we’ve been begotten in the spirit of our mind so that we are begotten by the Father. We have the Holy Spirit, which has the two functions of the begettal by the Father and the Spirit of Christ for the mind of Christ.

Isaiah 46:3: “**“Hearken to Me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, who are borne by Me from the belly, who are lifted from the womb.”**

So, it starts right back from when we were conceived. Isn’t that amazing? Think on that! God has intervened to call us. Let’s understand this: God is going to be always there. ‘I am with you always,’ Jesus said.

Verse 4: “**Even to your old age I am He...**” God will not leave us alone when we’re old, when we’re weak, when we’re at the very most vulnerable part of the time of our living, when we come to the time when we’re ready to expire in the flesh. ***He won’t leave us***, regardless of what you may have to go through to die.

“...and to gray hairs I will carry you. I have made you, and I will bear you up; even **I will carry you, and will deliver you**” (v 4). *That’s something!* That gives us hope; *great, great, fantastic hope!*

Verse 5: “**To whom will you liken Me, and make Me equal, and compare Me, that we may be alike?”** Isn’t that something! ***That we may be like Jesus Christ and God the Father!***

Let’s understand how God made Adam. ***He formed him from the dust of the earth!*** Probably like a red clay. This is why God uses the instruction here for us so that we can understand what God is doing. So that we can let God mold us:

- with His Spirit
- with His way
- with His Word
- with His thoughts
- with His love
- with His faith
- with His hope

that He gives to us

Jeremiah 18:1: “The Word, which came to

Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, ‘**Arise and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will cause you to hear My words**’” (vs 1-2).

Sometimes we need a concrete example to look at. So, here’s one that God gave to Jeremiah.

Verse 3: “Then I went down to the potter’s house, and, behold, he was working at his wheel” (v 3).

You know the potter’s wheel where he spins it with his feet, and he has the clay and he can make whatever he wants to. If it’s too dry then he puts some more water in it. If it’s too wet then he puts a little more clay in it and he mixes it up.

Verse 4: “And the vessel that he made of clay was ruined in the hand of the potter...” So, something happened to it while it was, maybe was spinning and he had his thumb just in there the wrong way and BAM! it broke the clay.

“...so he made it again into another vessel...” (v 4).

Isn’t that something? Think of it this way: the first vessel is our physical birth, and we are marred with the *law of sin and death* inherited from Adam, who was made from clay. What He does, He forms it again into another vessel and we are to be to God, through Jesus Christ:

- vessels of honor
- vessels of glory
- vessels of love

This is something here that we have both of those right in this verse.

“...so he made it again into another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it” (v 4).

Whatever God wants. Let me tell you this: even the least of all the saints, what they receive is going to be so great and fantastic, beyond what we think of or can comprehend. Because we still ‘look through a glass darkly.’

Verse 5: “Then the Word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘**O house of Israel...**’” (v 5-6).

Let’s talk about the Church being the *spiritual* Israel. Those who are in the Church of God really need to wake up and pay attention to what God has done with His calling and what He’s going to do, and how He’s going to do it—so that they can repent and receive eternal life.

Verse 6: “**“O house of Israel, can I not do with you even as this potter?”** says the LORD.”

- Are you not going to be malleable in My hands?
- Are you not going to be cooperative with Me in My working and molding you?
- forming you?
- creating Christ in you?

That's what He wants!

“...‘Behold, as the clay is in the potter’s hands, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel’” (v 6).

That's quite a lesson for us. That's quite something. And then He goes on talking about nations, but we just applied it here, spiritually. Now, let's see this whole process:

- of God forming in us
- working with us
- working in us
- and changing us
- and building His character
- building His love
- His faith
- His hope
- His compassion
- His mercy
- His kindness

The zeal that we need to serve God! God's name is also called *Zealous*. We need to understand that!

Let's see how God does this—Eph. 4:11—in understanding this in the past this has always emphasized the ‘office’ of those who were in ‘high positions.’ Jesus said if you're going to be great, you're going to be in the low position. Because *you're going to serve*, that's what He told the apostles, and ‘everyone who exalts himself is going to be abased.’ Let's just understand, as Paul said, that he was a servant, and Timothy was a servant to serve the brethren, to teach them the Word of God.

Ephesians 4:11: “And He gave some as apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers.”

Here's the whole purpose. The whole purpose is not to give offices, but these are all functions of elders doing the things that God wants them to do. The Apostle Peter said he was an elder, but he was also an apostle. When he was ‘apostling’ he was doing the work of an apostle. When he was prophesying, he was doing the work of a prophet. When he was evangelizing, he was doing the work of an evangelist. When he was pastoring, he was doing the work of a pastor. When he was teaching,

he was doing the work of a teacher. These are functions; for what purpose?

- not to exalt a man
- not to make him great in his own eyes
- not to have people look up to him

Like they do to the pope: they bow down to his feet; they kiss his ring; showing submission to it. *That's all Satan's way!* That's where Jesus said, ‘You're not going to do as the great leaders of the Gentiles.’

Notice the reason for it, v 12: “**For the perfecting of the saints...**” That's what it's for. The work that God is doing as the Potter is to *perfect us*. How great is that *perfection* going to be?

Matthew 5:48: “Become perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.” That's the goal, because we're going to be the sons and daughters of God. If so, then that makes us in existence equal with God. Obviously, less in authority. But, if we're going to live forever, God has got to really give us the character that's commensurate with living forever. You don't want to live forever in the flesh and constantly fight the ‘law of sin and death.’

Verse 12: “**For the perfecting of the saints**, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ.” That is to *up-build*:

- not rule in fear and tear down
- not make edicts contrary to the commands of God
- not rule by hatred and fear

But teach in love and understanding, for the *edifying*, the *up-building* of the saints. That's what it's for, because we also have the Scripture that says: ‘How shall they learn unless a teacher is sent?’

Verse 13: “Until... [it's a continuous process] ...we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, **unto a perfect man...**”

When you come to the end of your life and you die in the faith, you have been perfected as much as God is going to perfect you in this life. So therefore, while we have time let's yield to God and let's *let Him make us* into the perfection that He wants, so that He can glorify Himself.

- How much more can God do with us *if we're willing?*
- How much more can God do with us *if we love Him?*

Rather than be ‘rich and increased with goods’ like the Laodiceans, or like the Sardisites that

are dead. As I've said many times, they're just a 'corpse with a pulse.' Or the Church at Thyatira that gets involved in bringing in the 'doctrines of Jezebel,' or the Pergamites who are the ones who have the things 'sacrificed to idols,' and the hierarchy. Or even the Ephesians who 'lost their first love.' They had their first love because Christ was with them. The apostles were with them, and then they became complacent. Complacency is also a choice. That's why God tells us to repent!

Notice the goal, and this is why we have the Feast of Unleavened Bread every year.

"... unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (v 13). That's tall order, isn't it?

- Is God capable of doing that? Yes, He is!
- Are we capable of yielding to God and being malleable like the clay in the potter's hands, to let Him form in us what He desires?
- Are the heart and the mind and the attitude commensurate of eternal life? Yes!

That's why I said, you're in the University of Eternal Life. Every Sabbath is continuing education. Every Feast and Holy Day is continuing education, growing in grace and knowledge and understanding. And every year, God gives us an increase in it.

Now then, He gives a warning. And unfortunately today, too many of the brethren have not heeded this warning:

Verse 14: "So that we no longer be children, tossed and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men in *cunning* craftiness..."

- that's why we're to know the Word of God
- prove the Word of God
- understand the Word of God
- know right from wrong
- know Truth from error

"...with a view to the systematizing of the error... [the deception of the false Christianity of Satan the devil] ...but holding the Truth in love..." (vs 14-15).

That's what we are to do and that's what the Feast of Unleavened Bread is all about—get rid of all the works of the flesh. Put those out. Put out sin. **Bring in**, with:

- the Spirit of God
- the Truth of God
- the Way of God
- the love God
- the Word of God

the perfecting of God's Spirit! Let 'the washing of the water by the Word' form us.

- erase those things from our minds
- cleanse our hearts
- cleanse our minds
- eliminate the trauma
- eliminate the things that we have gone through in the past

Let God wipe it from your mind, and be created in perfection!

Verse 15: "But holding the Truth in love, may in all things grow up into Him Who is the Head, even Christ."

God said He's creating Israel. Notice *spiritual* Israel:

Verse 16: "From Whom... [that is from Christ] ...all the body, **fitly framed and compacted together** by *that which* every joint supplies... [*everyone counts* before God] ...according to *its* inner working... [so it's inside, in your mind and in your heart] ...in *the measure of each individual part*, is making the increase of the body unto *the edifying of itself in love*." ***That's what Christ wants us to do!***

We're going to go through almost every verse here in this section of Eph. 4, because it is the Feast of Unleavened Bread instruction in season.

Verse 17: "So then, I declare and testify this in the Lord that you are no longer to walk even as the rest of the Gentiles are walking, in the vanity of their minds."

That's why we started out: ***if you are walking according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh***. That's it right here. So, if you walk in vanity and self-importance what happens?

Verse 18: "Having *their* understanding darkened..." I've seen this happen over and over again. Every minister, every member, every person that gets lifted up in vanity, gets carried away with their own vanity and 'a little leaven leavens the whole lump' and what happens?

"...*their* understanding darkened..." And all you have to do is look out and see all the weird and stupid and terrible doctrines that have taken place as the result of scattering the Church to try and test us to see:

- Do we love God?
- Are we going to stay with Him?

or

- Are we going to get carried away with our own vanity and be led away like a ring in the nose of the swine, by Satan the devil to do his work?

I don't have time to give a litany of all the false doctrines that come along.

"...being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their hearts" (v 18). This is going clear back into the world; *we're not to do that!*

Verse 19: "They have cast off all feelings... [think of the society we're living in today] ...and have given themselves up to licentiousness, to work every uncleanness with insatiable desire.... [or lust] ...But you have not so learned Christ; if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, according to the *Truth* in Jesus: That concerning your former conduct **you put off the old man...**" (vs 19-22).

That's our responsibility. Confess our sins, "...put off the old man..." Get rid of the sins, have them cast into the depths of the sea.

"...which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts; and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind" (vs 22-23). That's what God wants! 'That you be renewed in the spirit of your mind'—***and proving all things.***

Verse 24: "And that you put on the new man..."

- you're to put ***out*** the old, you're to put ***in*** the new
- you're to put ***out*** the leaven, you're to put ***in*** the unleavenedness of Christ

"...put off the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts; and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that you put on the new man, which according to God is created..." (vs 22-24). *God is creating us in Christ Jesus!* He's forming us. Let's be that *spiritual clay*:

- that God can mold
- that God can shape
- that God can lead
- that God can be delighted in creating in you all of His character

So that you become perfected and ready for the resurrection and the return of Christ!

"...created in righteousness and **Holiness of the Truth**. Therefore... [when you're putting in this, you put out, you put away] ...let each one put away lies and speak the truth with his neighbor... [you put

out the sin, you put in true righteousness] ...because we are members of one another. *When you become angry, do not sin.... [there's a righteous indignation]* ...Do not let the sun go down on your anger..." (24-26).

God does not want you carrying the sin or the anger of today into tomorrow. I've even seen some of the most wonderful people get hung up on bitterness, anger and hatred toward the actions of a man! They were looking to a man rather than Christ. Understand this: when you look to a man, God is going to guarantee that that man will fail. So, they get all angry. They get all bitter.

Verse 27: "Neither give place to the devil"—because you give entrance then to the thoughts of Satan. He wants to come along with a "little leaven that leavens the whole lump."

Verse 28: "Let the one who stole, steal no more; rather, let him labor with *his* hands, working *at* what is good, so that he may impart *something* to the one who has need." *Notice the changing:*

- put ***out*** old, put ***in*** the new
- put ***out*** the leaven, put ***in*** the unleaven
- put ***out*** the ways of the flesh, put ***in*** the ways of the spirit

Verse 29: "Do not let any corrupt communication come out of your mouth..." *That's hard to do!* We all say and do stupid and foolish things. And that's why God has given us repentance.

"...but that which is good and needful for edification that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not vex the Holy Spirit of God..." (vs 29-30).

Now let's understand something. You want to know what grieves [vex] the Holy Spirit of God? *Read about the seven churches!* All those things grieve God and His Holy Spirit and He says: 'Repent!' That's what we need to do. The time during the Feast of Unleavened Bread is a time:

- to repent
- to recommit ourselves
- to be renewed
- to be invigorated
- to be given the strength and power of God to overcome
- let God mold us
- let God bring us in the way that we need to

So therefore, here's all the leaven to put out:

Verse 31: “Let **all bitterness...**” Not just some when you are ready, but **all** bitterness. When you repent you have to ask God: ‘*Give me the washing of the water by the Word.*’ All the bitterness from whatever experience, from whatever thing that you’ve gone through in your life—going clear back to your childhood, as far back as you can remember, coming clear forward to today—get rid of **all** bitterness, **because that sours the mind!**

You have vindictiveness, and you forget that God says, ‘Vengeance is Mine.’ You have anger and hostility. You need to get rid of all bitterness because as the Proverb says: ‘It is the rottenness of the bones’ because it gets right into your inner most being. It affects your very physical life.

Verse 31: “Let all bitterness, and indignation, and wrath, and clamor, and evil speaking be removed from you, together with all malice; and be kind *and* tenderhearted toward one another, forgiving one another, even as God has also in Christ **forgiven** you” (vs 31-32).

Ephesians 5:1: “Therefore, be imitators of God...”—with His Spirit. That’s how we practice. Just like little children are imitators of the adults—their parents and those around them—so we, as the children of God, are to be imitators of God the Father and Jesus Christ.

“...as beloved children; and walk in love... [that’s how we are to do it] ...even as Christ also loved us, and gave Himself for us *as* an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor” (vs 1-2).

“...do not permit it even to be named among you...” (v 3).

Now let’s see the process very specifically: what we are to do. Or it tells us how we are to live our lives and with this how God is going to mold in us. Remember:

- through the ‘washing of the water by the Word’
- through the receiving of the Holy Spirit
- through the commandments and laws of God
- through the action of the Spirit within us

To guide us, to give us grace and knowledge and understanding!

Colossians 3:1: “Therefore, if you have been raised together with Christ, **seek the things that are above...** [always keep your mind on the goal] ...where Christ is sitting at *the* right hand of God. Set your affection on the things that are above, and not on the things that are on the earth.... [because

those are all going to pass away] ...For you have died...” (vs 1-3)—*in baptism, a covenant death!*

That’s why at the Passover we renew the New Covenant, because we have pledged our lives unto death to keep the New Covenant. Your old man is dead in that watery grave.

“...and your life has been hid together with Christ in God. When Christ, *Who is* our life, is manifested, then you also shall be manifested with Him in glory” (vs 3-4). As John says, ‘We will see Him exactly as He is.’

Now, that is the whole key: *keeping our mind focused on the goal!* On Christ. On the Kingdom of God. And you look at all the problems and difficulties that you may be going through—and when you have the perspective—then ask God to help you to deal with them and ask Him to fight your battles for you so you can overcome them. You will see the smallness of the perspective that they really are in relationship to the overall goal.

Verse 5—this is what we are to do. This is the kind of action that we are to have: “Therefore, put to death your members, which *are* on earth...”

Get rid of them. In other words, let it be expunged out of your mind, out of your thoughts, out of your consciousness, so you are not lusting after these things, desiring these things.

“...sexual immorality, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil desires, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things, the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, among whom you also once walked, when you were living in these things” (vs 5-7).

Don’t go back like you were, in the world. And yet, think how many brethren have fallen by the wayside, that when it came down to it—and they were told, ‘Listen, you don’t have to keep the Sabbath—Sunday is just as good. You don’t have to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread, you don’t have to keep the Passover, you can have communion.’ How many just went for it, hook, line and sinker?

I never will forget the description of what happened to the Church—one of the big churches down in Pasadena, California—where when it was announced from the pulpit that it’s okay to eat unclean meats that they went like a charging herd out to the Red Lobster, and celebrated by eating shrimp and lobster and all the unclean things.

Now, you can expand that and say, they did it also spiritually. Not just the physical act. They gave up in the heart and mind first. They accepted the lie first, because they weren’t doing this.

We have to go on because this is a perfecting thing. Day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, Sabbath after Sabbath, Passover after Passover, Holy Days after Holy Days, we keep growing in grace and knowledge.

Verse 8: “But now, you should also put off all *these* things...”

Just like you search out to get rid of leaven in your house. That’s why He has us get rid of the leaven, so we can see how easily sin can be set upon us, and it comes from the most unexpected places.

“...wrath, indignation, malice, blasphemy, and foul language from your mouth.... [put it out, ask God to cleanse your heart and mind from it] ...Do not lie to one another, *seeing that* you have put off the old man together with his deeds, and have put on the new man... [this is what we’re to be looking to: putting on the new man] ...who *is* being renewed in knowledge according to *the* image of Him Who created him...” (vs 8-10).

We are being created by God the Father in the image of Christ!

Verse 11: “Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian *nor* Scythian, slave *nor* free; but Christ *is* all things, and in all. Put on then...” (vs 11-12).

Here is what we’re to put on, constantly. That’s why, when we go through and pray, and we say, ‘Forgive us our sins as we forgive others,’ *we are asking God to cleanse us*. So we need to have Him cleanse us with the ‘washing of the water by the Word.’ Just like clothes that have been cleansed and come out smelling fresh and nice and good and right and are pleasant and delightful.

Verse 12: “Put on then, as *the* elect of God, Holy and beloved, deep inner affections, kindness, humility, meekness *and* long-suffering... [the very character of Christ] ...**forbearing** one another, and **forgiving** one another...” (vs 12-13).

Forbearing is important, because when you start praying for someone who has a difficulty, you don’t have to run up and say, ‘Oh, I see you’ve got this problem.’ No, you *forbear* and you pray for that person, and you ask God to work and deal with that person. Whatever he has done, forgive him, encourage him—**forbear**—that’s what’s so important. That’s why you have forbearing first and then forgiving one another.

“...if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so also you *should forgive*” (v 13).

That’s how God works with us and molds our heart and our mind and gives us the character of Christ, and the mind of Christ!

Verse 14: “And above all these things *put on* love, **which is the bond of perfection**—because we are to be perfected! We are ‘to be perfect as the Father in heaven is perfect.’ That bond of perfection comes from God the Father to us. It’s like *bonding*. It is like *connecting, developing, forming, molding*, you see. That’s “...the bond of perfection.”

Verse 15: “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts... [not worry, not fear, not hatred, not bitterness, not any of the works of the flesh but]: ...to which you were called into one body, and be thankful.”

This is the perfection. This is the molding. This is Christ and God the Father working with us through the power of the Holy Spirit *to develop in us the very character that comes from Him* so that we can be

- unleavened in Christ
- cleansed in Christ
- purged and washed with the ‘water by the Word’

Verse 16: “Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom...” That’s what leads us. That’s what guides us. The Word of Christ *in us*, becomes a very part of our being.

“...teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And **in everything**—whatever you do in word or in deed—do all in *the name of the Lord Jesus*, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him” (vs 16-17).

This is what we are to do. ***This is how God forms in us His character***, so that we can be tenderhearted, be loving. Yes, we stand for the Truth against the world, but with each other and toward God we’re tenderhearted, we yield to God, we do the things that please God. We’re obedience, we’re forgiving, ***and we end up with the mind of Christ and have the hope of glory!*** That is the workmanship of God the Father, that we are created in Christ Jesus!

Scriptures from The Holy Bible *in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Romans 8:1-3
- 2) Deuteronomy 5:29

- 3) Romans 8:3
- 4) Micah 7:18-19
- 5) 1 John 3:13-24
- 6) Proverbs 16:1-3, 6-7
- 7) Proverbs 3:1-10
- 8) Psalm 92:5
- 9) Psalm 10:17
- 10) Ephesians 2:4-5, 8-10
- 11) Ephesians 5:25-26
- 12) Ephesians 1:4-5
- 13) Ephesians 5:26
- 14) Isaiah 43:1-5
- 15) Isaiah 44:21-27
- 16) Isaiah 46:3-5
- 17) Jeremiah 18:1-6
- 18) Ephesians 4:11-12
- 19) Matthew 5:48
- 20) Ephesians 4:12-24, 22-32
- 21) Ephesians 5:1-3
- 22) Colossians 3:1-17

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Hebrews 10
- Psalm 103
- Psalm 19
- Ephesians 2:1-3
- 1 Corinthians 15; 1
- Revelation 2; 3

Also referenced: Sermon Series:

- *Keys to Answered Prayer*
- *Love of God* (#1—*When All Else Fails, Remember, God Loves You*)

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