



# The Illustrated Life Of Paul

*Charles L. Quarles*

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## **The Illustrated Life Of Paul** Charles L. Quarles

Except for the Lord Jesus himself, no person has been more influential in the history of the church than Saul of Tarsus. Paul's influence upon the early church's most cherished convictions is so clear and powerful that some scholars have dared to describe him as the founder of Christianity.

Paul had a greater impact on the formation of the Christian church than any other apostle. He wrote thirteen of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament so that nearly half of the New Testament documents bear his name. Although some of Paul's letters are brief compared to other New Testament books, his epistles compromise approximately one-fourth of the total volume of the New Testament.

Approximately sixteen chapters of the Book of Acts focus on Paul's persecution of the church, conversion, missionary labors, arrest and imprisonment. When these chapters are combined with Paul's letters, Paul may be recognized as the author or subject of nearly one-third of the New Testament. Paul was not only the most effective Christian missionary and church planter in history, but also the most significant and influential interpreter of Jesus' teachings and of the significance of Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and return.

This book introduces readers to this amazing man and his incredible story. It explains the background of each of Paul's letters and offers a summary of the beliefs of one of the keenest theological minds in the history of the church. All along, it enables the reader an opportunity to step into the world of Paul with over 150 photos, maps, illustrations, and charts.

## **The Illustrated Life Of Paul Details**

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# **From Reader Review The Illustrated Life Of Paul for online ebook**

## **Sjervey says**

I chose this book for an Advent exercise. It was more of a struggle than I had expected. Quarles has reconstructed the life and journeys and public challenges Paul faced. Sadly, he tries to go beyond and tell us what Paul's motives were in various situations where Paul left no written explanations. He seems to do this in a zeal to rescue Paul from any controversies that may have been raised in scholarly literature. This would have been fine if he had kept it at the level of his speculations on how these controversies should be resolved. But often I felt he was telling us what Paul was thinking or intending when such things can not be known. While this is a very well illustrated review of Paul's missionary work, it is a muddying contribution to an understanding of Paul's thought. I can only recommend it to readers who will be carefully critical of its excesses.

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## **Erin Osumi-Demotte says**

### **TRULY... A Great Biographical Book On The Life Of Paul The Apostle**

A Great Biographical Book On The Life Of Paul The Apostle  
Paul...

Deep, insightful, & True to The Word of GOD. With illustrations of the actual cities, and archaeological inscriptions of people named in the Word of GOD, that the archaeological word said never existed... Until it was actually dug up and "discovered" like it always is, with every name and place found exactly like the Word Of GOD said in the first place... "Let the LORD be True, and everyone else be a liar"

Best book I've written on Paul's Life... if your looking for some kind of "shocking" hidden knowledge of the gnostics or the right to rule over a congregation like the Nicolaitans... this book isn't for you... It's solidly based on Acts and the Epistles that Paul wrote Inspired by GOD, the HOLY SPIRIT...

GREAT BOOK, GREAT READ

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## **Maurice Rubino says**

### **St. Paul, the original missionary of Christianity**

It is now clear to me that St. Paul is the prime voice behind the Christianity we know today. He led an inspired life from one who persecuted early converts to an individual whose life was devoted to spreading Christ's words, works and resurrection even though he endured much physical suffering including stoning, imprisonment and finally execution.

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## **Lindsay Kennedy says**

Full review here: <http://wp.me/p2YKx0-1pc>

There is little to complain about in *Illustrated Life of Paul*. It is well written, informative and enjoyable. I'm sure it would benefit pastors, teachers, Bible College-level students and virtually any other Christian. If I were to teach a class on the book of Acts, I would most likely assign this as required reading. Unbelievers will no doubt find it "too Christian" or "too devotional" to be taken seriously. Though a Christian biography, in terms of quality of research, it would not be an accurate dismissal. I would highly recommend *Illustrated Life of Paul* to anyone interested in the ancient world, early Christianity, early missionaries, the book of Acts, and obviously, the life of Paul.

*I received this book in exchange for a review. B&H's generosity has not affected my review.*

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## **Sarah says**

The *Illustrated Life of Paul* by Charles Quarles is, as the title demonstrates, an account of the life of Paul with illustrations (mainly photographs) of the places he is associated with, maps to give one a picture of where he went, and photographs of archaeological finds from Paul's era. For the most part, Quarles does a good job of sticking to the Biblical account, and I do not remember him questioning, or even hinting at doubting or questioning the Bible's accuracy in the least.

But I have a few issues with this book. First, Quarles takes some liberties in imagining Paul's thoughts and feelings. Here is an example of his imaginative pictures: "Paul was happy to be back in Jerusalem. He had lived in Jerusalem longer than any other place. It still felt more like home to him than anywhere else. His sister's family lived there (Acts 23:15). He was thrilled to see her, her husband, and her children. His nephew was practically a grown man now. Where did the years go? Paul wondered. Paul had no regrets over the years he had invested in sharing the gospel around the world, but he did sometimes miss the joys of hearth and home, of watching his nieces and nephews grow, and of reminiscing with his sister about their childhood....when Paul looked into his sister's face, he still saw his father's eyes, and her smile was just like his mother's. Looking into her face always brought back a flood of memories." He doesn't give these imaginative scenes a lot, normally he just gives a straightforward account along with historical details, he includes a bit of speculation, but doesn't paint imaginative scenes like the one above, but that just makes his ventures into imaginative 'pictures' of Paul even more out of place and embarrassing.

Second, and related to the above, the author makes statements in various places throughout the book that bothered me, speculating on why the Apostle's may have gone to such and such a city, or why they did such and such. When he was speaking of Paul in Athens he was commenting on the strategic advantage of getting people in that city to see the credibility of the Gospel, "If the gospel won acceptance in this intellectual center, it could no longer be dismissed as the fantasy of madmen. Instead, Christianity would be recognized as a reasonable faith accepted by some of the world's most brilliant thinkers." I really don't think that Paul's goal was to have the Gospel recognized as 'intellectually credible' by the brilliant thinkers of the day, rather I would assume, based on his writings that he would have expected the opposite, "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And the discernment of the discerning will I bring to nought. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe. Seeing that Jews ask for signs, and Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumblingblock, and unto Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the

wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men." (1Co 1:19-25)

And third, among the illustrations of the book is at least one nude statue of a man (the 'god' Hermes). I don't need to know what the 'gods' of the day looked like, nor do I think that such illustrations are appropriate in a Christian book.

Overall, I simply didn't 'love' the book, and I'm not exactly sure why. Perhaps because one could simply pick up the Bible and read Acts and Paul's epistles to learn about his life? I mean, technically speaking, it was Luke's biographical account of Paul that made it into the Bible, so who could really write a better biographical account? I have absolutely no problem with people writing biographical accounts of Biblical characters as long as they make sure to have the Bible as the primary and most authoritative source of their information, and Quarles does a pretty good job. it was okay and others may like it better. It does give interesting historical background information of the time.

I really liked how Quarles ended the book, by encouraging a proper perspective of Paul as God's slave/servant, and that people should not admire the Apostle too much:, "Although those who study the life of the apostle cannot help but be moved by his faithfulness, inspired by his passion, and awed by his commitment they must not forget that Paul would blush, not with embarrassment but anger at such accolades. To those who would deify him, he would retort, 'Men! Why are you doing these things? We are men also, with the same nature as you' (Acts 14:15). To those who would sing his praises, he would quickly reply, 'Was it Paul who was crucified for you? Or were you baptized in Paul's name?' (1 Cor 1:13)....Although this book has attempted to help readers better know the mind and heart of the apostle Paul, Paul himself would insist that this was not the point....'For I didn't think it was a good idea to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. (1 Cor 2:1-2) Know him, Paul would say. Know him....If knowing Paul stirs a yearning to know the One for whom he suffered, the One whose name he proclaimed, the One for whom he died, then Paul lived and died well. (then he quotes Phil 1:20)."

Many thanks to B&H/Lifeway blog review program for sending me a complimentary review copy of this book (My review did not have to be favorable)!

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### **Linda C. Long says**

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. I have been studying the book of Acts while reading this book and it has provided very helpful and interesting background information. I thought that this added detail about the life of Paul has not only brought my Bible study from black and white to full technicolor but it also seemed to bring Paul to life and allow me to meet him in person. I had always admired and appreciated Paul as I read about him in Acts and read his epistles, although separated by many centuries, but now he has become a close and dearly beloved brother and friend.

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### **R. A. Schwarting says**

**Outstanding**

This book brings St Paul to life as well as his writings, the very foundation of much of the New Testament. Rewarding read, a great blessing!

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## **Michael Boling says**

Many, many books have been written on the life, theology, and impact of Paul and his writings found in the New Testament. Given he wrote the majority of the books of the New Testament, such attention is of course founded and necessary. There are those authors who take a quick overview of Paul and his ministry and there are those who dig much deeper, analyzing the plethora of issues found in Pauline theology from a more academic mindset. Out of all those approaches, one can find quite a few solid works, some that are just so-so and unfortunately many that take a liberal bent towards Paul. In the group of works that are solid can most certainly be included Charles Quarles' *Illustrated Life of Paul*.

While I certainly love those "nerdy" scholarly books with page after page of digging deep into a particular subject (with no pictures I might add), I must admit I have been increasingly drawn towards works that back up just a bit from the minutia and take that needed overarching look at a subject. Included in these type of books are what I think are valuable illustrations and pictures that help the reader get a sense of what life was like during the time period they are studying. Sometimes being able to look at what the city of Thessalonica for example looked like provides a needed mental picture as one reads through Paul's letter to the believers at Thessalonica.

Quarles notes the purpose of this book is "to introduce readers to this amazing man (Paul) and his incredible story." I submit that Quarles does an excellent job of meeting his stated goal. He begins with a look at the background of Saul of Tarsus, providing the reader with a look into who Saul was before God turned his life upside down for the cause of Christ and renamed him Paul. Arguably, many forget Paul was trained by the famed Rabbi Gamaliel and thus was learned in all matters of the law. Quarles rightly notes the description Paul gave himself as Hebrew born of Hebrews "portrays Paul as a committed Jew whose family resisted the subtle influence of their Gentile environment and sought in all matters to remain faithful to the traditions of their fathers."

The majority of Quarles' book is spent on walking the reader through the life of Paul as reflected in the book of Acts and in Paul's New Testament writings. He does an excellent job engaging the various events in Paul's life, specifically what took place during his missionary journeys, along the way inserting helpful illustrations that as noted earlier in this review, provide the reader with a bit of insight into the first century world in which Paul lived and ministered.

An example of the helpful insight Quarles provides can be found in his comments on the city of Ephesus and Paul's time spent there. Quarles aptly comments "Because Ephesus was the provincial capital and the economic hub of the province, people from all over the region were constantly traveling in and out of the city. This made Ephesus an ideal location for the propagation of the gospel." Of course Ephesus was also the center of the worship of the goddess Diana and Paul's interaction and declaration of the gospel in this town got him into a bit of hot water.

If you are looking for a very accessible and comprehensive look at the life and ministry of Paul, then I highly recommend this book. Quarles does an excellent job of looking at Paul in a way that will help the reader better appreciate how God used this man to spread the message of the gospel. Quarles does not engage that much on deep matters of theology in this book like one would find in a book devoted to Pauline theology,

although he does at times interact with Paul's theology at various points on the book. If you are desiring a theological treatise on Paul's works, you would need to seek out other books that focus on that subject matter. Quarles book is a solid introduction and interaction with the life of Paul and the books he wrote and to that end it is highly successful and worth obtaining as a valuable resource.

I received this book for free from B&H Academic for this review. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255 : "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

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### **Analee says**

I really wanted this book to be more about the art. Because Paul was such a popular subject in art history I had hopes that it would be more of a collection of art with Paul as the subject through the ages. A look at how art portrays this 'giant' of a man. This turned out to be little more than an illustrated history. The illustrations were just modern pictures of the area where Paul lived and a few statues that remain of Paul. Without a lot of trust in the perspective of the author for the 'facts' of Paul's life I really didn't enjoy this book. Perhaps I would have enjoyed it more if I did, but really this was just not what I was expecting.

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### **Rob McClintock says**

I kept getting sidetracked from completing the book. But I enjoyed getting a bit deeper understanding of Paul and his travels and faith than I had previously from just the Bible. The maps were helpful to get a feel for the extensive trips he took. His faith was extraordinary.

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### **Annette says**

Source: Free copy from B and H Publishing in exchange for a review.

Rating: 5 stars for excellent.

Summary:

Illustrated Life of Paul follows chronologically the life of Paul in the sixteen chapters of Acts that focus on him and his New Testament letters.

Chapters

"Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: The Background of Saul of Tarsus

Chapter 3: The Damascus Road

Chapter 4: The First Missionary Journey

Chapter 5: The Jerusalem Conference

Chapter 6: The Second Missionary Journey

Chapter 7: The Third Missionary Journey

Chapter 8: From Jerusalem to Rome

Chapter 9: Paul's Last Years"

In the Preface, Charles L. Quarles explains,

"I have sought to wed deep love for the apostle Paul with deep love for the truth. Some will likely argue that this approach sacrifices the objectivity of the good historian. However, I have attempted to follow solid evidence in reconstructing Paul's life without becoming the detached and disinterested historian that was the ideal of modernism." Page ix.

The Introduction states Paul's importance for the New Testament Church. I believe Quarles has painted a beautiful portrait of Paul. From explaining Paul's early life, to education and training, his role as a Pharisee, dramatic conversion, missionary journeys, ministry, and martyrdom.

Both Old Testament and New Testament Bible references are included.

Explanations are defined for terminology (Hebrew, Greek, Latin.) For example: Makkot (Hebrew), referring to flogging, the word in Hebrew is stripes; provocatio (Latin) a trial.

The term of justification (accounting terminology) and how "rabbis were fond of describing God as a great accountant who kept an enormous ledger." I'd not read this expression before.

The book is arranged like an illustrated magazine-think National Geographic.

Illustrations of photographs, art work, archaeology artifacts, and maps are in vibrant color.

My Thoughts:

I feel this is a marvelous book to read cover to cover and to use for reference.

I'd read remarks from other reviewers this book is a "basic" study of Paul. I love basic. Basic to me means exactly what I need to read pertaining to the person and not fluff.

Reasons why I awarded Illustrated Life of Paul 5 stars for excellent.

Page 33. "The Spirit had so broken Paul's heart that he neither ate nor drank for three days. His fast was natural and voluntary. It exhibits his deep and sincere repentance and his utter shock at this amazing turn of events. The Damascus road revelation had turned his world upside down." This statement reveals how all Christians should feel: Jesus has "turned our world upside down" and we are never the same person again.

Chapter 4 explains, "The doctrine of justification" and its "important hallmark of Paul's message.

Enjoyable reading pleasure in learning about the apostle Paul.

Visually engaging illustrations.

Chapter 7. "Supernatural activity." Luke describes in the third missionary journey "extraordinary miracles," see Acts 19:11-12. Seven pages are devoted to the history and ministry of exorcism.

Chapter 9. Paul's final arrest, imprisonment, and martyrdom. Nero's brutality, and the conditions in the prison were especially gruesome and heartrending.

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## **Craig Hurst says**

Second only Jesus Himself, there is no other person about whom more ink has been spilled than the Apostle Paul. The last (but certainly not the least!) of the Apostles and writer of thirteen books of the New Testament, Paul is a central figure within the New Testament and the history of the Christian church. While much of the writing on Paul addresses his theology, there are fewer books that deal with his person, life and missionary journey's.

Seeking to add to this body of literature Charles Quarles, professor of New Testament and Biblical Theology at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, has written Illustrated Life of Paul. Over the course of nine chapters Quarles covers the life and ministry of Paul from his pre-conversion as an oppressor of Christ's



followers to his final days in a Roman prison where, as a follower of Christ, he was “proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and hindrance.” (Acts 28:31)

## Summary

Quarles begins by introducing the reader to Paul himself. Here we look at his family background, citizenship as a Roman, job skills and religious education and career. Chapter three deals at length with Paul’s (as Saul) Damascus road experience with Christ that resulted in his dramatic conversion. This is first introduced by showing Paul’s pre-conversion anti-Christian zeal. Admittedly, Quarles has to fill in some of the details as to what Paul’s life might have been like during this time. He mentions some question as to whether Paul was one of the 70 members of the Sanhedrin that voted to stone Stephen, noting that if he were he did not mention it later “in Philippians 3 when he recited his Jewish credentials.” (20)

Chapters four, six and seven cover Paul’s three missionary journeys. The order of the chapters follows from one city to the next while giving detail about the occasion of his visit and background about the city itself. When discussing cities in which Paul later wrote letters to a church there Quarles makes the connections between the book and the specific issues Paul addressed like sexual immorality in Corinth (32, 120). Smaller cities where Paul did not spend much time are given a few paragraphs and cities to which he either wrote a letter or we have more information on are given much more space (Corinth, Antioch, Philippi, Athens and Ephesus which receives a considerable amount of space). As is expected, Quarles follows the book of Acts for a timeline and itinerary of Paul’s travels. He also has an excursus dealing with the events between Paul’s first and second missionary journey as it relates to the events described in Acts 15:1-2 and Galatians 2:1-4, concluding that the Galatian event preceded the Acts event (78).

Chapter five covers the Jerusalem conference concerning the issue of circumcision for Gentile believers. Chapter eight tells the story of Paul’s visit to Jerusalem after his third missionary journey and then his trip to Rome where he would be arrested, tried and then freed. The final chapter in the book discusses Paul’s final arrest where he would live out his final days in a Roman prison. Using knowledge of the prison system of the time and some indicators from the New Testament, Quarles sketches out how the final days of Paul’s life most likely were.

## Evaluation

*Illustrated Life of Paul* is a wonderful overview of the life and ministry of Paul. As the title indicates, this is an illustrated look at the life of Paul with many full color pictures of maps, paintings and places that are relevant to the topic at hand. Not only are there many helpful pictures to aid the reader in gaining a better grasp of Paul’s life, but Quarles does a masterful job of painting pictures in readers’ minds with his words. His wedding of the text of Scripture with historical and cultural information goes a long way to creating a fuller picture of Paul’s life and ministry and gives the book less of a clunky feel as if reading a textbook.

Overall this is a helpful and up-to-date book on the life and ministry of Paul. This would be great for personal study, will aid pastors in preaching and teaching and can be used as a text for college and possibly graduate level classes (though for graduate level classes this needs to be supplemented with other works).

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## **Kathleen (Kat) Smith says**

Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could find a Bible that was illustrated in such a way that it gave you a sense not only of what life may have been like, but what it looked like as well? We read of some many towns and cities in the Bible but unless you have a Bible map and a modern day map, it is hard to trace where the locations of those cities or towns might have been. The Illustrated Life of Paul by Charles L. Quarles does just that utilizing the letters that the apostle Paul wrote to many of the churches of the New Testament from the towns of Corinth, to Thessalonica, to even the cities of Ephesus and Smyrna.

Except for the Lord Jesus Christ himself, no person has been more influential in the history of the church than Saul of Tarsus who would later be renamed Paul. Paul's influence upon the early church's most cherished convictions is so clear and powerful that scholars debate whether Paul is a mere follower of Jesus or the actual founder of Christianity. Paul himself settled that debate when he described Jesus Christ as the cornerstone of the church and the head of the church. Paul insisted that Jesus has preeminence in all things, in both the church he founded by his death and resurrection and the creation he fashioned by his indescribable power.

Approximately sixteen chapters of the book of Acts focus on Paul's persecution of the church, his conversion, his missionary labors, and his arrest and imprisonment. Paul laid more bricks in the foundation of the church than any other apostle. He wrote thirteen of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. Nearly half of the New Testament documents bear his name. Although some of Paul's letters are brief compared to other New Testament books, his epistles comprise approximately 1/4 of the total volume of the New Testament. Paul's influence on the development of Christianity is without parallel. He was a highly effective Christian missionary and church planter and is a key interpreter of Jesus' life, death, resurrection and return. Except for Jesus of Nazareth, no man's life has been more fascinating. It truly does provide the reader more background detail about the cultures, the cities and towns as well as people surrounding the ministry of Paul along with some amazing photos throughout the books as each chapter is dedicated to a portion of Paul's life and travels along the way.

I received Illustrated Life of Paul by Charles L. Quarles compliments of B and H Publishing Group for my honest review. I did not receive any monetary compensation aside of a free copy of the book in exchange for my personal and honest evaluation. I love being able to take this book side by side with the Bible and get a truly visual perspective of what is happening either through the book of Acts or even in the time of one of Paul's letters. We know that there is more than went on and this background is key along with the photos to give the reader a broader view of the urgency of the letters for example or what was happening in the day as the church began to grow and at times get divisive. For me this makes a wonderful visual commentary to aid me in my daily Bible reading in regards to the life and ministry of Paul and thus rates a 5 out of 5 stars in my opinion. I would love to see these for all the books of the Bible!!! It makes it truly come to life in a more powerful way.

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## **Jimmy Reagan says**

Outside of Christ, who's life is most critical in the big picture of the New Testament? I imagine we would all answer the Apostle Paul. In that case, we will need a composite description of his life. For that need enter this fine volume by Mr. Quarles and published by B & H Publishing.

There are several famous, yet thick scholarly volumes on the life of Paul, such as those by Conybeare and Howson, Farrar, Bruce, and Pohill, but perhaps this accessible volume will better serve most Bible students. It will definitely help to connect the Book of Acts with the Epistles of Paul in a most helpful way.

The work is biographical and chronological and pleasantly fits in each Epistle to events of Paul's life. That really brings the text alive! We know something of Paul's hardships but seeing what he faced where it happened is even better. You will read what scourging for Jewish people was like as well as Roman flogging. His details on life in a Roman prison were more horrifying than I ever thought.

The first chapters on Paul's earlier days filled in many blanks for me. Explaining the routes, either sea or land, that Paul traveled made sense of many biblical statements. All in all, there is much helpful information and Mr. Quarles writes well.

The only suggestion I would offer is a comprehensive chart relating his life and the Epistles.

The visual aspect of the book is icing on the cake. The pictures are outstanding as are the maps that may look familiar if you have the well-done Holman Atlas of the Bible. This is a valuable resource!

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## **Ron W. says**

Quarles takes the reader through the major aspects of Paul's life to examine his journeys and his deeds to show how the world's largest faith began as a mustard seed planted by a few individuals, one of which was Saul of Tarsus. Overall, a good read.

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