

Scripture Standard

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Pleading for a total return to New Testament principles.



New Testament Principles - 2

Lovely pure refreshing drinkable water issues from Douglas springs on Winter Hill, Lancashire, UK.



On its way: farm, coalmine and industrial effluent pour into the river. Would you drink that water?

The Christianity revealed in the New Testament is pure at source. Down the centuries it has been adulterated by new doctrines and practices. If we are to please God by worshipping Him in Spirit and in Truth, then we must enthusiastically remove the accumulated dross of ages and resort to the original worship as revealed in the New Testament.

Sadly there are several modern translations based on seriously defective Alexandrian texts, However, the Byzantine Greeks have carefully copied the original Koine Greek text of the New Testament down the centuries, even where they do not follow its teaching. So a good translation of this text will help us to know how the Lord God wants us to worship Him.

Those Other Beatitudes

Derek L Daniell, Tunbridge Wells.

Most Bible readers are familiar with the beatitudes of Jesus recorded in Matthew 5:3-11. They are so called because the word “beatitude” means “supreme blessed of happiness”. Jesus is telling us who is blessed and why. But there are other “beatitudes”, or pronouncements of blessedness in the Bible, each of which also tell us who is blessed and why. These are also important lessons that need our attention.

Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin. (Romans 4:7-8).

This is a quote from Psalm 32:1-6. The blessedness was not that God did not charge man with sin, but that God forgave man when he acknowledged his sin. Our blessing comes because we are no longer separated from God, [Isaiah 59:2]. Blessed because in seeking and returning to Him he will have compassion and abundantly pardon us, [Isaiah 55:6-7].

If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, (1.John 1:9).

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life. (James 1:7).

This blessing came not because he was tempted, but that he endured, [Revelation 2:10]. This is the crown of victory for those who have fought the good fight, finished the race and kept the faith, [2.Timothy 4:6-8]. With the help of God we are able to endure temptation [1.Corinthians 10:13]. As we run the race of life we have in Jesus, our great priest, our example. He was tempted as we are, yet without sin and in confidence we can receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need, [Hebrews 4:14-16].

Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it. (Revelation 1:3).

There is always a blessing in reading the word of God.

The complete blessing is ours when we hear and keep what is written, James reminds us that we need to be doers of the word, not only hearers:

But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty and perseveres ... will be blessed in his doing. (James 1:23-25)

Jesus ended his sermon on the mount with these words:

Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them, will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

(Matthew 7:24-27)

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on, "Blessed indeed" says the Spirit that they may rest from their labours. (Revelation 14:13)

At our baptism we become sons of God through faith and we put on Christ and as Abraham's descendants, become heirs according to His promise, [Galatians 3:26-29], We also find the rest that remains for the people of God, [Hebrews 4:9]. Like Abraham we look forward to the city that has foundations whose architect and builder is God, [Hebrews 11:10, 39-40].

Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. (Revelation 22:14)

This blessing that was lost in the Garden of Eden is restored because they have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, [Revelation 7:13-17]. They now have the right to enter by the gates into the New Jerusalem and partake of the tree of life. This is the promise of Jesus to those who are "faithful unto death" and who will be given the crown of life [Revelation 2:10].

The apostle Paul reminds us that we can be more than conquerors through Jesus who loves us, [Romans 8:37-38].

Are you fighting the good fight, will you be among the blessed?

Fight the good good fight of faith. Lay hold on eternal life.

1.Timothy 6:12

The Apostle - Simon Peter

Jonathan Ashurst, Byron, GA

When Jesus met Simon, he renamed him Peter, “which is by interpretation, A stone” (John 1:38-42). This name highlights Peter’s bold personality. Throughout his life Peter grew in his faith whilst learning to place his confidence in Jesus and not in himself.

One day, Jesus preached from Peter’s fishing boat and caused a miraculous catch of fish. In response, Peter and his friends left their nets behind and followed Jesus. [Luke 5:1-11] Peter was to be an involved witness of many more miracles during Jesus’ ministry, including the healing of Peter’s own mother-in-law [Matthew 8:14-15], the walking on the water [Matthew. 14:28-31], the purification of a woman with a twelve-year haemorrhage [Luke 8:45], the resurrection of Jairus’ daughter from the dead [Mark 5:37, Luke 8:51], the cursing of a fruitless fig tree [Mark 11:21], the miraculous provision of the tax money and the Passover room [Matthew 17:24-27, Luke 22:7-13], the glorification of Christ at the transfiguration [Matthew 17:1-8, Mark 9:2-8, Luke 9:28-36], the restoring of Malchus’ ear [John 18:10-11, Luke 22:49-51], and the interactions with Jesus after the resurrection [Luke 24:12, John 20:1-10, 1 Corinthians 15:5]. After Jesus’ resurrection, when Peter and several other disciples were fishing but not catching anything, Jesus appeared to them on shore and told them to cast their nets on the other side of the boat; just as at the beginning of his ministry, they suddenly had a bountiful catch [John 21:1-14]. Because of his bold trust in Jesus, Peter was able to see and sometimes participate in such amazing experiences.

When Jesus asked his disciples whom they thought he was, Peter proclaimed their faith that Jesus was the the promised Messiah. Jesus praised Peter for his faith and promised him the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Later, Peter would indeed be instrumental in introducing both Jews and Gentiles to the kingdom of heaven. At the time of his confession, although Peter realized Jesus was the Messiah, he still did not have a full understanding of the Messiah’s mission. When Jesus foretold his suffering, death, and resurrection, Peter began to rebuke him. Jesus told Peter that following him necessitated self-sacrifice and

denial of worldly methods [Matthew 16:13-28, Mark 8:27-38].

At various times, Jesus stressed to Peter the importance of forgiveness [Matthew 18:21-35], service [John 13:1-10], and inner righteousness [Matthew 15:1-20]. Jesus warned about difficult times to come and the trials his disciples would suffer for the kingdom, but reminded them of the great rewards [Matthew 19:27-29, Mark 10:28-30, Mark 13, Luke 18:28-30].

Peter and the others had sacrificed a great deal for Jesus, but their faith was severely tested when Jesus was arrested [Luke 22:31-32]. In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus asked Peter and the others to pray with him, but they fell asleep [Matthew 26:37-43, Mark 14:33-40]. Earlier that evening, Jesus had predicted that he would be betrayed and denied. Peter was confused about Jesus' impending suffering, asking where Jesus was going [John 13:36] and who the betrayer would be [John 13:21-24]. When Peter affirmed his loyalty, Jesus prophesied that Peter would deny him three times before the cock crowed [Matthew 26:33-34, Mark 14:29-31, Luke 22:33-34, John 13:37-38]. Later, Peter did deny Jesus three times. Then he remembered Jesus' prediction. He was grieved and wept bitterly [Matthew 26:69-75, Mark 14:66-72, Luke 22:54-62, John 18:15-27].

After the resurrection, when Jesus asked Peter about the level of his devotion, Peter could only reply that he admired Jesus. His confidence was no longer in himself, but in Christ. So Jesus asked Peter to feed his "sheep" [John 21:14-22]. Peter would eventually become an elder in the church [1 Peter 5:1-3].

Along with the other apostles, Peter was instrumental in spreading the borders of the kingdom among the Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles [Acts 1:8]. In Acts 1:15-22, Peter explained that prophecy had foretold Judas Iscariot's betrayal and subsequent replacement by Matthias as an apostle. Soon afterwards, at the day of Pentecost, Peter and the other apostles were all together when "cloven tongues like as of fire... sat upon each of them." They began to share the good news in the foreign languages of all the Jews who had gathered together. Peter's speech, to those of Judaea, is

recorded for us in Acts 2.

Multiple times, the authorities tried to stop the apostles from preaching, but Peter boldly stated that they were obligated and compelled to share the good news. The Lord miraculously delivered Peter from prison on several occasions.

[Acts 1:1-23; 1:1-42; 12:1-19]

As an apostle, Peter preached the gospel and confirmed it with signs, such as healing those with palsy [Acts 3:1-10, 9:33-35] denouncing those with hidden sins [Acts 5:1-12, 8:14-24], and raising a woman from the dead. [Acts 9:36-42]

When the good news spread to Samaria, Peter and John went to pray and lay their hands on them “that they might receive the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 8:14-17) Later, the borders of the kingdom opened to the Gentiles. After receiving a divine revelation, Peter went to share the good news with Cornelius and his household, and the first Gentiles were welcomed into the church [Acts 10]. Peter later explained to the Jews that God had made it plain by visions and the miraculous imparting of the Holy Spirit that the kingdom was now open to the Gentiles [Acts 11:1-18]. He assured them that Gentiles would not be saved by keeping the law of Moses, but “through the grace of the LORD Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.” (Acts 15:7-11)

Peter continued to accept the Gentiles, but focused mainly on reaching the Jews. Though highly respected, Peter sought to exalt Christ, not himself. Peter recognized that God had chosen Paul as an apostle to the Gentiles. Once, however, Paul had to publicly upbraid Peter for hypocritically avoiding the Gentiles when certain people were around.

[Galatians chapter 2, compare 1.Corinthians chapters 1 to 3]

Though he made mistakes, Peter learned from these mistakes and grew more mature. In his later years. He wrote two letters: 1st.Peter and 2nd.Peter. His first letter encourages us to remain faithful through the trials we face. His second letter reminds us of the truth of the gospel, witnessed by the apostles and foretold by the prophets. He warns against false

prophets and scoffers, encouraging us to prepare for the day of the Lord. Through the years, Peter's wife was a faithful companion [1 Corinthians 9:5]

Jesus saw a great deal of potential in this impetuous fisherman from Galilee, making him into a bold "fisher of men," who opened the kingdom to both Jews and Samaritans, and also to Gentiles.

BRINGING PEOPLE TO THE CHURCH

Kim J Boland, Abergavenny.

I was recently interested in a question posted on a linked in site. "how do we bring people to the Church". The answers suggested centred primarily around presenting a social gospel and providing food and social activities for people.

This is probably a good way to bring people into church buildings, but is it a way to bring people to the Church that Christ built?

I imagine we could hold a week of lessons on this subject, as it centres much on the role and place of the Church today, as well as on evangelism, and meeting peoples' needs.

What is the message that we need to bring to the world? In John we are told that when the Spirit came he would "will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgement:" (John 16:8). The modern world seeks to avoid these unpopular and "old fashioned" views. The religious world seeks to tell us that all roads to "God" are the same, and that the real concern is that people should live "good" lives.

What does Jesus tell us about guilt in regard to sin?: "in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me;" (John 16:9). Sin is not believing in Jesus. Paul tells us in 1. Corinthians chapter 15:

¹⁶For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁷And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

Jesus died to bring salvation! But not everyone is saved by his

death. We need to believe in Him to be saved. Thus Peter told those gathered at Pentecost:

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is **no other name** under heaven given to men by which we must be saved. (Acts chapter 4:12)

Our message needs to be clear that there is no other way to God. We are surrounded by political correctness, where various religions seek unity and reconciliation, and try to teach us that leading a good life is more important than our belief. Peter later continued this thought in 1 Peter chapter 3:

¹⁸For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit,....

Belief in Jesus' death and resurrection will save us, if we show our acceptance of that teaching by entering into that death and resurrection:

²¹ and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also - not the removal of dirt from the body but the appeal* of a good conscience toward God. [It saves you] by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,..." [*see endnote - editor]

In conclusion, our message and appeal to people must be of the only saving relationship with God, and not with a social gospel. The New Testament shows us so many examples of preaching and teaching which led to immediate baptism; The Ethiopian said to Philip:

“Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptised?”
(Acts 8:36).

So, starting with the Prophet Isaiah, Philip had clearly taught the life and death and resurrection of our Lord, and followed on with how we are to enter into that life. The Ethiopian was in no doubt of his next steps.

I have been concerned in observing much “social” ministering, in which, after many visits, the visitors have not had this message taught to them. The Ethiopian asked Philip, when

asked if he understood the passage he was reading, and thus leads us as to what we should be doing.

He said, "Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?"
And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. (Acts 8:31)

We must bring people to the "Church" by being open in our desire to guide and teach them. Back door social events, whether for the old or young (such as youth groups) will only bring people to the Church building.

Paul concluded his discussion in Athens by telling the people:

"Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone - an image made by man's design and skill." ³⁰In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. ³¹For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead." (Acts 17:29-31)

We cannot escape the need to convict the world, with the Spirits help, of "sin, righteousness and judgement". Let us be clear that although in the past God overlooked ignorance; He does not today. He requires people to repent. Our life on this earth is our last opportunity!

Let us not seek to bring a social gospel, but a gospel of the death and resurrection of our Lord, that we may not be answerable for the judgement of those we have failed to teach.

*επερωτημα is a legal term meaning 'an appeal.' In baptism the repentant believer is appealing to the LORD. For example Ananias told Paul to be baptised and wash away his sins "calling on the name of the LORD" [Acts 22:16, 23:1].

A "good conscience" does not mean sinless. It means a genuine conscience. Paul said he had always "lived in all good conscience." [Acts 23:1] Even though he called himself the chief of sinners [1.Timothy 1:16], he was always genuine - (Editor).

Micah's Levite

Temptations faced by full time church ministers.

James Lim, Lavender, Singapore

We all face temptations. There is one weakness faced by a paid preacher that has long term implications on the flock he shepherds.

A professional preacher like a Levite has no source of income except from the church. His salary, medical benefits, children's education, retirement fund etc. are fully dependent on the existence of the church. The larger the church the higher chance of a bigger salary. A church of dwindling membership is a cause for concern for his "rice bowl". It may be hard for him to accept that "increase belongs to the Lord".

Consciously or unwittingly, he must ensure his church survives. Thus it is not a surprise that, in his moment of weakness, secular methods are employed to make God's message more palatable on order to draw the crowd in.

Such a situation is found in Judges 17 about Micah's Levite. Micah's mother was thankful that her son returned the silver he took earlier without informing her. She decided to thank the Lord by making idols (verse 3). Micah then consecrated his own son to be a priest for all his house of gods. One day, a Levite came sojourning. Behold, a pure bred qualified person is here!! He was invited to be Micah's priest. In a time when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (verse 6), what should a Levite do when faithful temple worship was no more in fashion?

For his own survival, this Levite was struggling to obey "Man shall not live by bread alone" and he buckled under pressure. He had to eke out a living, ensuring he "brought the bacon home." He became a priest for Micah and his idols, instead of showing Micah the way of the Lord. The Levite certainly had his "rice bowl"

filled, shelter and financial support (Judges 17:10-13). As a result, Micah arrived at a false belief that he stood righteous before God (verse 13).

Subsequent experience should have taught him a lesson. Instead, the leaven spread. That one compromise, lead him into an even more serious compromise. [Read Judges chapter 18 verse 1 to 20].

Security in Christ Jesus [part 1]

Izu Egege. Sheffield.

It all started on the hilly banks of the Galilean sea just after winning His victory over the Devil. He has started His mission on Earth-man's redemption.

For the prophet had written about God's eternal plan for man:

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. (Jeremiah 29:11).

Also, Isaiah had written:

The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

(Isaiah 40:5).

God has revealed His glory by the great signs and wonders performed by Jesus Christ: The lame walked, the blind saw, the hungry were fed, the dead were raised, the list went on endlessly. Hence, the by-word became, "come and see." The hills of Zebulun and Naphtali were filled with curious souls wanting to be filled with the divine message from on high. Jesus therefore started making His pronouncement of blessings commonly known as beatitudes. These blessings are for those who believe!

His invitation is for all, promising eternal well-being for all who accept Him. He therefore announced:

Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what

you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? (Matthew 6:25, 6:33).

Jesus Christ invites all to come to him:

²⁸Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (Matthew 11:28-29).

What firmer assurance can one get better than this? All our earthly needs He pleads for us not to worry about. The bills, the clothing, the mortgages, feeding, etc.. These are the basic needs that make us all to loose sleep. He, by this singular pronouncement, has taken away all our life's burdens. He pleads for us all to lean upon His shoulders and trust in Him to provide all our needs. What other form of security do we need?

Consider what you may be told is security in this life, money to spend on life's pleasures, and pleasures to secure happiness? How the Devil has been deceiving us all with the same old trick beats me. Who says money can buy happiness? Why then do millionaires commit suicide? Why are millionaires left with broken homes? Why do millionaires take drugs as a means to run away from their self imposed complications in life? And yet, year after year, people kill for money, divorces, children run away from home, people sell their soul to the Devil for money and whatever other security they want in life. How foolish?

If you have already accepted Jesus invitation, consider the blessings he has freely given to us all:

²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23).

Love: Unconditional Love to all.

Joy: A great feeling of pleasure and happiness

Peace: Freedom from disturbance; tranquillity

Long-suffering: Having or showing patience in spite of troubles, especially those caused by other people

Kindness: The quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate.

Goodness: The quality of being good

Faithfulness: The quality of being faithful; fidelity

Gentleness: Considerate or kindly in disposition; amiable and tender

Self-control: The ability to control oneself, in particular one's emotions and desires, especially in difficult situations.

If one was to sell these blessings for money, how much do you think they are worth? How do you quantify these qualities in monetary terms? They are simply priceless! This is our lifestyle and much more. We forgive totally and never pay back evil for evil. No religion on Earth offers better. We are very peaceful.

There is life only in Christ Jesus:

He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. (1.John 5:12).

OUR LIFESTYLE

We are simply Christians and we urge you to consider our lifestyle and see if you would love to be just as we are. Our lifestyle is summarised by the following Bible verses:

⁹Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. ¹⁰Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honour giving preference to one another; ¹¹not lacking in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; ¹²rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; ¹³distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality. ¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. ¹⁶Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. ¹⁷Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. ¹⁸If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. ¹⁹Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give

place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. ²⁰Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." ²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:9-21)

What a very peaceful world we would have had should all embrace Christ Jesus, just as we have embraced him. The blessings that are in Christ Jesus are simply beyond measure. And the world would have been better. Yet, the world hates us so much and even wants us dead.

OUR ETERNAL HOPE

Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ²"In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴"And where I go you know, and the way you know." (John 14:1-4).

It is only in Jesus Christ that a firm promise of eternity of bliss and peace on earth is found. This he pronounced at the beginning of His ministry, with the beatitudes at the hills of Capernaum. "Blessed are you...!" For Jesus himself had said:

"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me". (John 14:6).

We live as the image of God almighty. That is who we are, His image:

Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, ¹⁰and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, ¹¹where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all. ¹²Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering. (Colossians 3:9-11).

GO!

Ken Lewis, Abergavane

"Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature"
(Mark 16:15)

Is this a verse all of us should be familiar with? Or are we prepared to leave it up to the leaders of the congregation we meet with?

It is the duty of the Christian man or woman to reach out to the lost of this world. There are plenty who are searching as did the Bereans in Acts 17:11.

Have you ever noticed there are two types of people in this world, the ones that know it all and the ones like those from Berea that searched the Scriptures to see if what Paul had told them was the Truth. In the first type we have in Acts 17:5 the Jews that didn't believe and started to stir up trouble in Thessalonica for Paul and Silas, which was the reason they were sent to Berea [Acts 17:10].

What was Paul doing? He was preaching about Jesus. What we, in our day, should be doing. How many of us, when we are out shopping, stop and talk to people and mention what Jesus has done for us? I like to talk to young mothers with their babies in the push chairs and prams. The Lord is giving me an opportunity to tell them of our Master who died on the cross for them.

All too often we miss opportunities by being like those Jews in Thessalonica, thinking we are better than the people we are trying to save! Yes we have been washed in the blood of the Lamb that's only the start of our walk with the Saviour. We will be tried and tested. Satan is for ever like a serpent trying to get us back into his kingdom and he will if we are not strong in the Faith. There are those that say "once saved always saved." Don't believe it:

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, if they should fall away to renew them again unto repentance seeing they crucify the Son of God afresh and put Him to shame. (Hebrews 6:4 -6)

Yes, like the Jews in Acts chapter seventeen verse five, if we are not careful we can fall into the same trap - "We know

better than you!" - a time bomb waiting to go off, that can cause a brother or sister to fall away or drive away a contact. During my lifetime I've often heard it said that God's worst enemy is the Christian.

A Christian is a servant and we should be serving one another with humility putting others before ourselves no matter how much it hurts our pride!

Buy the truth and sell it not. (Proverbs 23:23)

NEWS and INFORMATION

STRETFORD, MANCHESTER.

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October 18th.

Contacts:

Allan Ashurst. Tel. 0161-865 4242
John Purcell. Tel. 0161-439 1758

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To whom change of address should be sent.

EDITOR: Allan Ashurst, 60 Kenwood Road, Stretford, Manchester, M32 8PT

E-mail: AshurstA@aol.com

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