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DANIEL 4 STUDY GUIDE



Daniel chapter 4 is Nebuchadnezzar's personal testimony of God's love and patient persistence with a heathen king. This is the only part of the Old Testament written by a non-Hebrew and it was written after a humbling experience he went through that taught him to honor God. It was written to "all people, nations and languages that dwell in all the earth" (vs 1). Therefore, it was written even for us.

Its purpose is explained in vs 2 & 3 "to show the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me. How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation." Nebuchadnezzar had been a great warrior. He was called "the terrible of the nations" in Ezek 30:1,11 and the "hammer of the whole earth" in Jer 50:23. He was successful because God had put His "sword into the hand of the king of Babylon" (Ezekiel 30:25). But God was trying to reach the heart of this mighty king.

Exalted to the pinnacle of worldly honor, and acknowledged even by Inspiration as "a king of kings" (Ezekiel 26:7), Nebuchadnezzar nevertheless at times had ascribed to the favor of Jehovah the glory of his kingdom and the splendor of his reign. Such had been the case after his dream of the great image. His mind had been profoundly influenced by this vision and by the thought that the Babylonian Empire, universal though it was, was finally to fall, and other kingdoms were to bear sway, until at last all earthly powers were to be superseded by a kingdom set up by the God of heaven, which kingdom was never to be destroyed.

Nebuchadnezzar's noble conception of God's purpose concerning the nations was lost sight of later in his experience; yet when his proud spirit was humbled before the multitude on the plain of Dura, he once more had acknowledged that God's kingdom is "an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion is from generation to generation." An idolater by birth and training, and at the head of an idolatrous people, he had nevertheless an innate sense of justice and right, and God was able to use him as an instrument for the punishment of the rebellious and for the fulfillment of the divine purpose. "The terrible of the nations" (Ezekiel 28:7), it was given Nebuchadnezzar, after years of patient and wearing labor, to conquer Tyre: Egypt also fell a prey to his victorious armies; and as he added nation after nation to the Babylonian realm, he added more and more to his fame as the greatest ruler of the age.

It is not surprising that the successful monarch, so ambitious and so proud-spirited, should be tempted to turn aside from the path of humility, which alone leads to true greatness. In the intervals between his wars of conquest he gave much thought to the strengthening and beautifying of his capital, until at length the city of Babylon became the chief glory of his kingdom, "the golden city," "the praise of the whole earth." His passion as a builder, and his signal success in making Babylon one of the wonders of the world, ministered to his pride, until he was in grave danger of spoiling his record as a wise ruler whom God could continue to use as an instrument for the carrying out of the divine purpose.

In mercy God gave the king another dream, to warn him of his peril and of the snare that had been laid for his ruin. (1)

This story is the story of Nebuchadnezzar's conversion.

Please note: The entire chapter is provided here below, but because the study refers frequently to specific verses, it will be easier to complete it using a Bible opened to the chapter we are studying. This will prevent having to flip back to the pages at the beginning of the lesson as you progress through the lesson. You may also want to add notes or mark passages directly in your Bible.

These studies use the King James Version. Please keep in mind that if you use a different version, Bible verse fill-in-the-blank questions will not be a perfect fit and will not yield results that match the answers given in the answer key.

Daniel 4, KJV

1Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you.

2I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me.

3How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation.

4l Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace:

5I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me.

6Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream.

7Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers: and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof.

8But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my God, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods: and before him I told the dream, saying,

9O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee, and no secret troubleth thee, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof.

10Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great.

11The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth:

12The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it.

13I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven;

14He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches:

15Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth:

16Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him.

17This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.

18This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation: but thou art able; for the spirit of the holy gods is in thee.

19Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonied for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake, and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies.

20The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth;

21Whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation:

22It is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth.

23And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him;

24This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king:

25That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

26And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.

27Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.

28All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar.

29At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon.

30The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?

31While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee.

32And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

33The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.

34And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation:

35And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

36At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me.

37Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.

Daniel 4:1-5

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,	God send the kir		his tranquility?	

_____ PAGE 9 ____

"Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in his house. He had accomplished successfully all his enterprises. He had subdued Syria, Phoenicia, Judea, Egypt, and Arabia. It was probably these great conquests that puffed him up, and betrayed him into such vanity and self-confidence. And this very time, when he felt most at rest and secure, when it was most unlikely that he would allow a thought to disturb his self-complacent tranquility, — this very time God takes to trouble him with fears and forebodings." (2)

Nebuchadnezzar has another dream at the peak of his reign.

his nowarlass gods to the true God?

Daniel 4:6-18

3) How does God use the dream to turn the king's attention from

ino poweriess g	jous to the true	dou.	
A:			

Once again, as he had done when he had the dream that is recorded in chapter 2, the king called his magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans and soothsayers and again they could not interpret the dream, much to their mortification, even though this time, he was able to remember the dream and tell it to them.

When the king had his first dream, the magicians and Chaldeans had stated that if only he could tell them his dream, they could interpret it for him. But now he remembers his dream, and they are still not able to interpret the dream. It is a humiliating defeat for them.

Realizing that none of his usual counselors were any good, the king immediately calls upon Daniel and asks him to interpret the dream. He even acknowledges right away that in him is "the spirit of the holy gods." (also vs 18)

What symbol is the focal point of the drean

A:				

The dream centers around a tree. At the beginning the tree is described as being beautiful and useful but then it is cut down "by the decree of the watchers" (vs. 17). The watchers are the holy ones who watch over the earth. Their interest is in the salvation of all mankind, and that all men may come to a knowledge of God.



The holy ones, or the angels, show that they have interest in human affairs.

"They are represented as demanding this dealing with Nebuchadnezzar. They see, as mortals never can see, how unseemly a thing is pride in the human heart. And they approve of, and sympathize with, the decrees and providences of God by which he works for the correction of these evils. Man must know that he is not the architect of his own fortune, but that there is One who ruleth in the kingdom of men, on whom his dependence should be humbly placed. A man may be a successful monarch, but he should not pride himself upon that; for unless the Lord had set him up, he would never have reached this position of honor." (3)



Daniel 4:19

5)	What	does	Daniel's	reaction	to the	king's	telling	of	the	dream
re	veal al	bout h	is feeling	s toward	the ki	ng?				

A: _	 	 	 	

When Daniel heard the dream he did not have to go to God and ask Him for the meaning this time. He understood it immediately and it greatly troubled him, for he genuinely cared for King Nebuchadnezzar. For one hour, he doesn't speak because of what was in the dream - not because he doesn't know what the dream means, but because it is such a terrible warning. Daniel has been shown nothing but favor from the king, and now he is required to give him some terrible news, and Daniel is struggling with how to reveal it to the king as delicately as possible. The king encourages him not to be fearful but to tell him what the dream meant.

Daniel begins tactfully by exclaiming that he wishes the calamity about to befall the king would be for the king's enemies rather than for him. (vs. 19)

Daniel 4:20-26

A: _				

6) What is the dream's message to Nebuchadnezzar?

The dream is full of terms and symbols that are associated with judgment in the Scriptures. Daniel recognizes several markers in the dream that help him to understand the dream and provide its interpretation.

In vs. 15 the tree is left with a stump of roots in the earth with a "band of iron and brass." This refers to Lev 26:19: "And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass" which was part of the curse that was to rest on Israel if they disobeyed God.

Here God is using the same analogy in speaking to Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel recognizes this when he hears the dream, for Daniel was very familiar with the curse. (Daniel 9:11)

But the brass and iron around the stump would also preserve the tree so that it would regrow and symbolizes Nebuchadnezzar's restoration after the time of his affliction. Iron and brass are both symbols of affliction which God uses to bring people to their senses. God can only reach us when we're humble and can admit our need for Him, not when we're proud and in need of nothing. (Rev 1:15; Daniel 2:40)

Daniel also clearly understood the meaning of the seven times in vs. 16. It was a message of judgment indicating that Nebuchadnezzar's probation was coming to an end, and that he would receive a punishment if he did not mend his ways. The Bible often uses the word "seven times" as a sign of judgment. (Judges 6:1)

7) What does the phrase "seven times" symbolize?

Look up Gen 7:11. This passage pertains to the flood and we can learn how long a Biblical month is by doing some simple calculations.

a) In the 600th year of Noah's life, when did it start to rain? A:
b) Now look up Gen 7:24. How long did it rain? A:
c) Now look up Gen 8:4. When did the ark finally come to res
d) Now for some simple math. Since both dates are on the 17th day of the month, how many months difference is the 2r month to the 7th month? A:
e) 150 days divided by 5 months =
f) A Biblical month is made up of 30 days (Gen 7:11,24;8:4)
30 days x 12 months = days which would equal
year.
n prophecy, a year is often represented as a "day."
PAGE 15 —

	g) After	the _			of	the	days	in w	hich	ye
	searched	the I	and, e	ven				day	s, ea	ach
			for a				_, shal	l ye b	ear y	our
	iniquities,	even f	orty				_, and	ye sh	all kn	ıow
	my breach	of pro	mise. N	um 14:34	1					
	h) And wh			•				•		-
	•			I have			-			
		•	•							2011
			_ 101				-010 110			
Now I	et's unders	stand th	ne word '	"times".						
	i) Compai does the E				Re	v 12	vs. 6	and	14. H	low
	1260 days 1: time, time		a half a	time						
1260	divided by	360 = _								
A "tim Bibles article	14 we see e" in the Bi s.) "Times" e on the Da ://amazingo ole)	ible is c is 2 yea y for a	one year ars, and year Prii	or 360 da a half a ti nciple for	ays. me furtl	(See is a h her in	margir alf a ye formati	n in so ear. Se on.	me ee ou	
In Dai times'	niel 4, Neb '.	uchadn	ezzar is	told that	his p	ounis	hment	will be	∵"seve	ən

j) "Seven times" represents the seven years that Nebuchadnezzar would have to experience the chastising of the Lord.

7 x 360 =	:	day	/S
, v ccc -	•	auy	,

Seven times = 2520. The number 2520 is associated with judgment or punishment as described in Leviticus 26, where the same "seven times" are mentioned four times as a warning to Israel of the punishment they would receive if they strayed from the Lord.

The tree in the midst of the earth was a depiction of Nebuchadnezzar himself and of his remarkable reign, as well as of his great kingdom.

"Babylon, where Nebuchadnezzar reigned, was about in the center of the then known world. The tree reached unto heaven, and the leaves thereof were fair. Its external glory and splendor were great; but this was not all of it, as is the case with too many kingdoms. It had internal excellences. Its fruit was much, and it had meat for all. The beasts of the field had shadow under it, the fowls of heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it. What could represent more plainly and forcibly the fact that Nebuchadnezzar ruled his kingdom in such a way as to afford the fullest protection, support, and prosperity to all his subjects? Really to accomplish this is the perfection of earthly governments, and the highest glory of any kingdom." (4)

Under Nebuchadnezzar's leadership, the kingdom of Babylon had reached its Golden Age. Babylon ruled the world, and the conquered nations depended on Babylon for their food and safety. It was truly a wealthy empire.

A tree of such size with leaves that were fair to look upon must have an equally great root system. And this was indeed so.

"Gradually the principles upon which it was founded – principles older than the king, for they originated with Lucifer, and were a perversion of heavenly truths – had taken root. ... The seeds of that government were sown wherever Babylon established her power... Wherever there is tyranny in government in any nation of earth to-day, it is an offshoot of that root which filled the earth, the stump of which was allowed to remain until the end of time.



Wherever Babylon laid her hand in conquest, the principles of her religion were implanted. The vilest forms of worship were practiced in that kingdom with all its outward glory. The heart was rotten. The mystery of iniquity held full sway, hidden by the outward glitter of gold. The mysteries of Greece in a later day were but a repetition of the Babylonian mysteries. From the golden cup which she held in her hand, and which was a familiar symbol in Babylonian secret societies, she made all nations drunk with the wine of her fornication.

Nations and peoples today, unconscious of their origin, are perpetuating Babylonian religious customs when they celebrate Christmas with feasting, lighted candles, holly, and mistletoe. It is in commemoration of Babylonian heathen gods that they eat eggs on Easter, and even the wild capers of Hallowe'en repeat the mysteries of Babylon. The root was not destroyed; her religious principles have sprung up afresh in every generation and borne fruit in every country.

The influence of Babylon in educational lines was no less marked than her influence in government and religion, and the educational root of the tree was as vigorous as the others. We are in the habit of tracing the educational system of the world to Greece or Egypt; its principles are older than Greece. They belong to Babylon. ... The so-called "higher education" of to-day, which exalts the science of the world above the science of salvation; which sends forth students bearing worldly credentials, but not recognized in the books of heaven, students who love display, who are filled with pride, selfishness, and self-esteem,-- this education is a plant which has sprung from that broad root which supported the tree representing the Babylonian dominion. (5)

This is truly the case, as we will see in later chapters of Daniel and also in Revelation. The principles of Babylon, which originated with Lucifer and were established by Nimrod, the builder of the tower of Babel, continue all through time, being seen over and over again in succeeding nations and are still seen in our world today. Babylonian principles remain an influence in all areas of our society.

In the dream, a "holy one," someone from heaven, came down to say: Cut down the tree. Nebuchadnezzar was to be cut down, but the "stump of the roots" was to remain. God was sending Nebuchadnezzar a message. He was going to be taught a lesson of humility if he did not humble his proud heart. He was to be taken down from his throne, and "his portion" would be "with the beasts of the field" "in the tender grass of the field" and the "dew of heaven" would fall upon him till "seven times pass over him."



Daniel 4:27-33

ng for "a lengthening of thy tranquility" is "a healing buchadnezzar would humble himself he could avert is about to befall him. The threatened judgments they were to teach the king that God does rule.
are lifted up in pride and depend upon worldly can no longer sustain them, and they fall. Nations is alike have this experience The people who th, or intellect, or knowledge, or in anything save will be brought to confusion. In Christ alone 'are hid ures of wisdom and knowledge' (Col 2:3). Every tht, every intellectual idea, which in any way brings iginates with our Lord. It is God who is dealing with rules." (6)
Nebuchadnezzar a 12-month reprieve of his does this postponement tell us about God?
ella alli, suggiri

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Unfortunately, the king did not change his ways. All that was predicted came upon the king. He failed to profit from the warning he had received.

The Lord waited 12 months before sending the retribution. Nebuchadnezzar's pride reached a point beyond which God could not allow it to continue. But God's purpose was more than just to temporarily correct the king's pride. God knew that he could not be saved if he were allowed to continue in his course, but that this severe humbling would result in Nebuchadnezzar surrendering his will. Really, the whole population of Babylon was at stake. The king had great influence and many could be reached through his conversion.



One day, as the king was walking through his palace, he boasted about the great wonder - Babylon - which he had built. He forgot the Source of all his strength and greatness.

Instantly a voice from heaven announces the judgment of Nebuchadnezzar and in that moment, the king loses his ability to reason.

He no longer had the capability to appreciate and enjoy the glory of his kingdom, and he became like a wild beast in his mind.

He immediately left the palace and lived like a beast of the forest, sleeping outdoors and eating grass. His hair grew long and his nails became like birds' claws. For seven years, the king lived in this condition, while his kingdom was run by his governors and his son Evil-Merodach.



Nebuchadnezzar's dream and Daniel's interpretation of it, was likely well known throughout the palace, and so they would have anticipated the return of the king after seven years.

Daniel 4:34-37



10) What was the outcome of Nebuchadnezzar's humbling experience?

A:	 	 	

At the end of seven literal years (the seven "times" predicted), Nebuchadnezzar's reason was restored to him. The affliction he suffered had the desired effect. The first thing he does is to praise the God of heaven, and to recognize that He is in charge of all.

Matthew Henry makes this comment:

"Those may justly be reckoned void of understanding that do not bless and praise God; nor do men ever rightly use their reason till they begin to be religious, nor live as men till they live to the glory of God. As reason is the substratum or subject of religion (so that creatures which have no reason are not capable of religion), so religion is the crown and glory of reason; and we have our reason in vain, and shall one day wish we had never had it, if we do not glorify God with it." (7)

The 4th chapter of Daniel is Nebuchadnezzar's declaration and is the last record we have of his life. It was written, according to Dr. Clark, in 563 BC, one year before Nebuchadnezzar's death. We must assume that Nebuchadnezzar died in the faith of the God of Israel.

The Holy Spirit worked on Nebuchadnezzar's stubborn heart for many years before he surrendered his life to the God of heaven. The patience God showed toward Nebuchadnezzar gives us hope as He continues to work with us and those we love.

King Nebuchadnezzar, before whom Daniel and his three friends so often honored the name of God, was finally thoroughly converted, and learned to "praise and extol and honour the King of heaven." The king upon the Babylonian throne became a witness for God, giving his testimony, warm and eloquent, from a grateful heart.

"Thus closed the life of this remarkable man. With all the temptations incident to his exalted position as king, may we not suppose that God saw in him honesty of heart, integrity, and purity of purpose, which he could use to the glory of his name? Hence his wonderful dealings with him, all of which seem to have been designed to wean him from his false religion, and attach him to the service of the true God. We have, first, his dream of the great image, containing such a valuable lesson for the people of all coming generations. Secondly, his experience with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego in reference to his golden image, wherein he was again led to an acknowledgment of the supremacy of the true God. And lastly, we have the wonderful incidents recorded in this chapter, showing the still unceasing efforts of the Lord to bring him to a full acknowledgment of himself. And may we not hope that the most illustrious king of the first prophetic kingdom, the head of gold, may at last have part in that kingdom before which all earthly kingdoms shall become as chaff, and the glory of which shall never dim? (8)

Personal Reflection

Is God trying to reach you through the trials you're facing? Is there someone you should earnestly be praying for as Daniel prayed for Nebuchadnezzar? Let us not resist the Holy Spirit when He convicts us of sin and of righteousness (John 16:8) and pray that God will give us and those around us repentance (2 Tim 2:25).

Prayer

Oh, Father, You are so patient with me! Please take away the hardness of my heart, give me repentance and teach me to live for Your glory. Amen.

For Further Reading on the <u>The Day-for-a-Year Principle</u> visit our Read section of our website: <u>www.amazingdiscoveries.org</u>.

You may find the following two books also useful. They are available in our Read section on our website under Resources & Study Guides: The Two Babylons (ebook), The Trail of the Serpent (ebook).

Answer Key

- 1. Nebuchadnezzar wrote this chapter of the Bible. It is his conversion story.
- 2. God gave him a scary dream.
- 3. The king asked his wise men, who supposedly got information from the gods, to explain the dream, but they couldn't.
- 4. The dream is about a great tree.
- 5. Daniel was concerned about the king's well-being. He didn't want anything bad to happen to him.
- 6. The dream is a warning of coming judgment unless the king changes.
- 7. a) 2nd month, 17th day
 - b) 150 days
 - c) 7th month, 17th day
 - d) 5
 - e) 30
 - f) 360, 1
 - g) Number, forty, day, year, years
 - h) Day, year
 - i) 3.5
 - j) 2520
- 8. Daniel appealed to the king to repent and change his ways.
- 9. God is patient and merciful.
- 10. Nebuchadnezzar came to his senses and was converted.

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