

Let No One Deceive You

by Alan Martin

This sermon emphasizes the importance of testing all things by the Word of God to discern truth from deception. It warns about false prophets who speak empty words, focusing on the need to be aware of their messages that often omit the weighty truths like the judgment and wrath of God. The sermon highlights the significance of being persuaded by God's truth and the consequences of refusing to be persuaded, leading to the wrath of God. It stresses the need to walk in the light, live holy lives, and be separate from the ways of the world to avoid being deceived and falling into sin.

Scripture: Ephesians 5:10, 2 Timothy 2:22, 2 Corinthians 6:14, Romans 1:28, 2 Thessalonians 2:9

Topics: "Discernment", "Holiness"

Description

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Transcript

What is the well-pleasing? What is well-pleasing to the Lord? Well, let's look at verse 6 again. I want to touch upon that a little bit. That's where we left off the last time I was here.

Verse 6. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of Eden. So, a question for you. Who is most likely to use empty words to deceive? Who's most likely to use empty words to deceive? Hmm? No? Think.

What are we warned about most? False prophets. False prophets are the ones that are most likely to use empty words to deceive. And listen, understand that false prophets are sincere men sharing what they believe.

You have to look, don't look for some con artist. False prophets can be sincere men sharing what they sincerely believe, but they're wrong. You have to be careful.

They run with their message, the Bible says, but God didn't send them. They have a message, and they believe that message is important, and they share it. Remember what Jesus said to Matthew 24 11? Joe,

you want to read that for us, Matthew 24 11? Next slide.

What you do is click on the next slide, and it'll, it pulls it up. Yes, Matthew 24 11. Okay, so that's what we're to be watching.

We're to watch for false prophets, which are men speaking empty words. Now, here's the question. If they're speaking empty words, the words are missing something.

They're in, what are they missing? What do you think the message of false prophets, sincere men speaking their own, what do you think is missing from their message? What do you think? Well, the truth, yes, that's broad. There's parts of the truth they're going to love to speak about. So, but there's going to be parts of the truth left out.

What part do you think are going to be left out? Kind of the weighty things, maybe the difficult things. How about the judgment of God, and the wrath of God, and what Jesus is going to do? You know, I have a very good friend of mine who no longer believes that in the eternal punishment. In his mind, that's just too hard, and it's just too difficult to think about, and that's just something that he can't conceive that a good God doing.

He's just, I walk with his brother. This man loves the scripture. This is not some con artist.

This is a man I know personally, but it's no longer something he wants to talk about. He's got a new message. And so, I know how sincere it can be.

Now, I ask you a question if you know the scripture. How does God characterize the message of false prophets in the scripture from the Old Testament? Rudy, my brain would probably know, but in case of question, what does God say their message is? God describes their message as something. What does he say it is? Well, it has been, he has a particular way of saying it.

Do you remember? It's in Jeremiah and Ezekiel. They both say it. Peace, peace is their message when there is no peace.

That's their message. Peace, peace when there is no peace. Now, why is from God's perspective there is no peace when they're claiming there's peace? The false prophet is telling the people, you're at peace, be at peace, and God's saying, no, there's no peace.

Why is there no peace in God's point of view? Because peace is the fruit of righteousness. And unless there's righteousness, there's no peace. There's no peace for the wicked.

They're like the foaming of the sea who cannot rest. It's the fruit of righteousness that brings peace. You must remember that.

Now, learn this about men who speak their message and go with their message. They'll speak freely of the love of God, the grace of God, the goodness of God, the peace of God, the blessing of God, the promise of God, God's heaven, but they seldom speak about the wrath of God or the judgment of God or calling men to repentance from what they're doing. Now, and that's important.

We, if we got Romans, are we, are we stuck in that, Sam? There it is, Romans 11. Rudy, can you read that for us, Romans 11, 22? Behold the kindness and the severity of God upon those who have fallen severity, but upon the kindness of God, if that is you continue His kindness, otherwise you will also be

caught up. Okay.

Behold is an old word. How would we say it today? Hey, watch out. Hey, look, look, look carefully at this.

Listen, Saint, University Park, you had better look very carefully at the severity of God. It's who He is. It's not made up.

He's not severe because some fundamentalist Bible thumper made Him that way. He is severe towards evil and wickedness. He's severe in time.

He's perfectly both. And we had better not blink. We can create a God in our own image and kind of leave that part off.

And that brings up a question. Why do you think false prophets, these sincere men who are running with their message, why do you think they don't talk about the severity of God? Why do you think they don't? They want to say what the people want to hear. Yeah.

And so you're acknowledging it's kind of difficult to hear about the severity of God. It's kind of difficult to hear about judgment to come. Even though it's in a lot of scriptures.

Have you noticed how many of you read the Bible? It's there, right? It's there. The writers of the New Testament wrote about it a lot. But it's a difficult message to hear.

And so in general, Rudy, you're kind of right. They're generally very positive, very uplifting. And they kind of want you to get that part of the message on your own.

They're not going to deny that it's there, but it's just not their focus. Well, I don't know. Yeah.

So let's look at something in back to verse six. We don't have to have it up there on the verse. But a question from something in verse six.

Let me read verse six again. Let no one deceive you with empty words. For because of such things, the wrath of God comes upon some that are disobedient.

There is a question. Why does the wrath of God come? Why does it come? Because of such things. What things? Because of what things? Well, the things that Paul had mentioned in verse five.

What had we been talking about? Let there not even be any fornication, no covetous, no idolaters, no slanderers. Because of such things, the wrath of God. That's why he is so good.

He is against those things. You know what those things are? They're an abuse of what he's created. Fornication is abuse of his gift of sex to men.

Drug use is an abuse of the things he has given to treat men. They are. And the reason they're an abomination to him, Paul, is because he's so good.

He has to be against things that harm you. He has to be. That's the reason he calls them evil.

So now, back to what you had said, Joe. The why is because of such things. The who is? Who does it come upon? The son of disobedience.

That's what you notice. That's who it comes upon, and that's interesting. What's interesting to me about that is the word in the original language for disobedience.

That's what your English versions have. Up there, what I have, oh, it has that verse 6, that they're disobedient. But the Greek word comes from the word pitho, the root word pitho, which means to persuade.

But they add the negative a in front of it, apitho, which means non-persuaded. The English word apathy comes from this word, apathia. It literally means refusing to be persuaded.

The heavens declare the glory of God, but men refuse to be persuaded. The skies proclaim the work of his hands, but they refuse to be persuaded. The good news goes into all the world, but they refuse to be persuaded.

And the wrath of God comes upon them because they refuse the persuasion that God has given them to call him to himself. That's very important. This word was used in John 3.36. Tom, you want to read John 3.36? The same word for refusing to be persuaded was used by the Lord Jesus.

However, the one who refuses to be persuaded by the Son will not see God. See? The wrath of God applies to whoever disobeys the Son. It makes sense.

The reason you don't follow through is you're not convinced. Jesus says, don't do this. And if you keep doing it, you know why you're doing it? Because you aren't convinced yet.

Oh, you can say, yes, Lord. You can give lip service. You can sing.

But when you're convinced, you do what he says. That's how you show that you've been persuaded. And the wrath of God is on those who are refusing to be persuaded now.

So here's what a true prophet will do. A true prophet will seek to persuade you to turn from your evil ways and turn back to the Lord. That is a man of God.

He's trying to seek you to stop doing the things that cause God's wrath to come, to believe what he says, so that by faith, you can be saved. By grace, through faith, you can be saved. That's what a true prophet does.

And that's what we need to be a part of doing. James 5, verse 20. Brother David, Neper, can you read James 5, 20? Do you see how he saved his soul from death? You get him to stop doing the things that cause God's wrath to come.

If he's an adulterer, he better stop being an adulterer or God's wrath is going to come. You seek to persuade him. You better stop that.

The wrath of God is coming. You're a drug abuser. You better stop that.

The wrath of God is coming upon that. You know, so you see, whoever saves a man from the error of his ways, you turn him from the error of his ways, you save their soul from death, and you cover a multitude of sins. Another place that's mentioned is in 2 Timothy, chapter 4, verses 1 through 4. Let me read that.

We can read it together. Let me read it a little bit lengthy. In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead.

Now, notice this. Notice what Paul calls our attention to. In the presence of God.

That's what he told Timothy. Seek to show yourself approved unto God. Here's the difficult thing.

I want you to approve of me. I want to be liked, but I had better seek to be approved unto God. It's his word, and he's going to take issue if I doctor it up to make it sound better to you.

He's going to take just a spoonful of sugar, have some medicine, go down. That's good for Mary Poppins. But here we need the Word of God, which is living and active, right? And notice the other thing.

He's not saying, I charge you in the presence of God, and in you, what did he say, who will judge the living and the dead. You see where Paul's looking? He's not looking back at the cross here. He's looking ahead.

We love what our Lord did. He died on the cross for our sins, but Paul is looking to what's ahead, what's waiting us, the one who now is the judge of the living and the dead. He's going to open the books of judgment at the great white throne of judgment and deal with every man according to their deeds.

And he's looking ahead. In light of these things, what did Paul tell Timothy to do? Preach the Word, be prepared in season and out of season, correct, rebuke, and encourage. Now, why does there need to be correction and reproof and encouragement? When is there a need for correction? When you're doing something wrong.

What about rebuke? How about rebuke is, don't you already know better than that? You step at another notch, isn't it? It's not just making sure you didn't understand it. It's like, you know better, stop that. That's with you.

That's uncomfortable, isn't it? We don't like that. It's not easy, but Paul tells Timothy, do this with great patience, long suffering and careful instruction. And then he says this, the time is coming when men are not going to endure a sound doctrine, but instead it says they're going to, because they want to suit their own desires, they will gather around themselves a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.

And they will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to me. So Paul, because he loved the people he wrote to, is always reminding them of what's ahead and what's ahead for the believer. Remember, it's appointed unto man once to die and after this we go to heaven, right? Is that what the scripture says? Oh, I left out something.

It's appointed unto man once to die and after this, the judgment. And the judgment decides what's coming next. And a true servant will remind you of this.

So now, Ephesians 5, 7, the next verse, Ephesians 5, 7, that's why because God's wrath comes on such things, Paul says, therefore do not be partakers with him. In other words, don't do what they do. Don't live like they live.

Don't imitate them. We imitate the Lord Jesus. Revelation 18.4, Sister Yolanda de los Angeles.

Can you read that for us? Revelation 18.4. Come out of her. Why do you think she is receiving plagues? Because of her sins. So if you share in her sins, but you're not going to get the plagues? Look, you share in her sins, you're going to share in her punishment.

This is the Lord Jesus speaking to his church. The book of Revelation is written to the church. So I say to my church family here, if you participate in the sins of the world, you're going to receive the plagues of the Lord.

This is just what the scripture says. We need to know these things. And Paul was clear in this.

Another place that's even clearer, 2 Corinthians chapter 5. Another lengthy passage. Let me follow with me as I read it. I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people.

Not at all meaning the people of the world who are immoral or the greedy or swindlers or idolaters. Because in that case, you would have to leave the world. But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister, but is a fornicator or greedy, idolater or slanderer or drunkard or swindler with such people who do not even eat.

What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Look, they're not here. They don't come to church. They are what they are.

I'm not saying you can't associate with them. It's your work. You be friendly.

You be kind. Have dinner with them. Get to know them.

Be a witness. Love them. Speak the truth to them.

But if there is somebody here who claims to be a Christian and you're a swindler or a drunk or a jerk or an adult or a fornicator, you have no business here. That's not even supposed to be among us at all. We're not to even have fellowship with them.

That degrades the name of the Lord Jesus. That's all I'm saying. It's pretty serious.

Paul is very, very serious. He goes on. All right.

Let's go to verse 8. All right. Verse 8, Ephesians 5, 8. Reina, can you read that? Ephesians 5, 8. Yeah, good question. So you're in it now.

You were darkness. None of us are anymore. Not if you're in Christ.

You're in Christ. You're the light of the world. And so what does it mean to walk as children of the light? Well, verse 9 is the key.

Kathy Knepper, can you read verse 9? Here's the key. Here's what it means to walk in the light. You can walk like that, can't you? Can every single one of us walk in all goodness, in all righteousness, and all truth? We're to speak the truth to one another.

We're not to lie. We're to put off falsehood, right? And we're to do good as we have opportunity to do good, especially to God's people. And we're to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

And then all things will be added. That's what it means to live as children of the light. You make it your goal.

Every week, every day, every year, all the time, every situation, do what's good. Do what's true. Do what's right.

Do it by the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ living in us. So, and then, oh, just a couple of things that go along with that. 2 Timothy chapter 2, verse 22, another, some more Paul's exhortation.

Brother Ben, Serta, can you read 2 Timothy 2.22? Can you imagine? Here's Paul. He's writing to Timothy. So it'd be like me saying to Jesse, or to Nathan back there, or Elijah, or Samuel, or some of you younger guys, hey guys, please, leave a desire to music.

Run. Don't flirt with it. Run.

And pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Choose your friends carefully. Walk with those who are serving the Lord with a pure heart.

Keep yourself safe. Because bad company does what? It corrupts good morals. I know we want to be a witness, but we have to be careful who we walk with.

He who walks with the wise becomes wise, but a companion of fools comes to ruin. A lot of good people have been ruined by the association with the bad friends, bad company. You need to be careful.

Another way of saying this, and this is to show how common the concern was in the New Testament, 2 Peter chapter 3. I'm going to read this one because it's lengthy. 2 Peter chapter 3, basically 11 through 14, and then I'm going to read verse 17 also. Looking ahead, we know what's going to happen in the days to come when the Lord Jesus returns.

Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed is coming. Because that day, excuse me, will bring about the destruction of heavens by fire and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise, we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness dwells.

Now how could these apostles, especially Peter, how could he have known that the earth would melt with the fervent heat? Is that even possible? Could the earth melt with the fervent heat? All the Lord has to do is to take away the magnetic field that's protecting the earth from the strong burst of the sun's rays. And one strong burst from the sun's rays without the magnetic field protecting the earth, the earth would burn up. Like that.

Just like that. Even our scientists tell us it's going to happen someday. It's just, so don't think it's, Peter knew this by the spirit of the Lord.

And we don't know how, that may be how God needs to do it. But here's what, knowing that that's what awaits the earth, is it going to be melt with the fervent heat? Here's what he says in verse 17. Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position.

I want to make your position very secure. I want all of us to be ready to stand before the Lord Jesus. I want us, I want every single person here to hear, well done thou good and faithful servant.

The only problem is we have an enemy of our souls. The same person who snuck into the garden to tempt Adam and Eve to try to ruin their lives is still out there at work today. We have an adversary of the devil and what does he do? He roams about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, except you won't recognize him as a lion.

He mostly appears like an angel of light, like a friend, like someone who has something flattering to say. It's interesting how the scripture warns about flattering words. Empty but appealing, positive.

It just, we have to know how to judge things. Paul said the same thing again about the danger of company, the danger of company. And the reason I want to make sure we understand this is because something could happen to me tomorrow.

It's like I'm remembering, I don't have this slide up here, but I'm remembering what Peter said. He said, he did this at second Peter. Even though you already know this and are already convinced in the things that you have heard and have learned, I'm going to make sure that when I leave, you'll never forget it.

That's kind of the spirit I'm in. I don't want you to ever forget this because there's other people out there that come along with good intentions, but if they are not solid in the word of God, we're all in trouble. Okay, second Corinthians.

Again, this is caution for the church. That's why Paul wrote this. Do not be yoked together with unbelievers, for what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of a living God.

As God has said, I will live with them and walk among them and I will be their God and they will be my people. And that's us. The Holy Spirit is the presence of God in our midst.

We are the temple of a living God. Therefore he says, come out from among men, come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. What's another word for separate? What does it mean to be set apart? Holy.

That's the very word. Come out from among them and be holy. And then he says, touch no unclean thing.

If you saw it in the original language, it'd be even more powerful. Come out from among them and be set apart and do touch no common thing. The word unclean is the Greek word for common.

Look, I don't care if everybody does it. That just makes it common. That's probably why it's unclean.

Jesus said to the Jewish leaders, you love wealth. What's highly esteemed among men is an abomination. The things that are most common that the world does, we're not to touch.

We're to be a holy people set apart. And if you do this touch no common thing and I will receive you and I will be a father to you and you will be my sons and daughters. Therefore, since we have these promises that God will be our father and that we can literally be sons and daughters, here's what we do.

Cleanse yourself from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness. Like you said, Joe, in the fear of God. See, without the fear of God, that's what the whole problem is with the wicked.

What is it? Psalm 37 or Psalm 36. An oracle is in my heart concerning the wicked. There is no fear of God in their eyes.

Therefore, they flatter themselves too much in their own eyes to hate or detect their wickedness. The fear of the Lord is the beginning. And if the fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, turning a man away from the snares of death, the fear of the Lord is as much a part of the Christian's life.

When I was a younger believer, pretty new in the Lord, still wet behind the ears as they say, I had the fortune of having an old beekeeper from Michigan, a bachelor who could read the Greek New Testament without any help. He just opened and I said, well, we start with the fear of the Lord and we kind of grow out of it into love, right? You know, we start with the fear, it's good, like your children, and then you grow up into the love of God. He just looked at me and said, you got it all wrong.

He quoted the Psalms, the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring, forever. Amen. And he said, you're talking about the verse in 1 John, perfect love cast out here, but that fear is about judgment.

When we love God perfectly, we don't fear the judgment, because when we love God, we keep his word. And when we keep his word, what are we going to hear at the judgment? Well done, thou good and faithful servant. You're following the Lord, he's going to see that you're attempting to follow him.

And look, and even if we sin when we're walking in the light, if we sin, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. That is if we're walking in the light as he's in the light. He's merciful, he knows.

We can tell the difference. If one thing, if I'm going this direction and I stumble, I get up, I keep going that direction, that's the right way I'm supposed to go. But what if I'm going that way? Even if I don't stumble, it's the wrong direction.

God knows the difference. He knows which direction you're going. He knows if you're following his son.

He can see that. There's no fear for us if we're following him. Yes, Rudy? It is interesting that in the wrong way, there are no obstacles.

You know, it says, it's amazing. Well, the way of the wicked is hard, but it actually says about the highway of the righteous, Isaiah. You love the prophet, he's your prophet, isn't he? What did he say about the highway of righteousness? He makes the way of the righteous smooth.

Every valley is raised up. Every high mountain is level. The rough way is made smooth.

The crooked way is made straight. That's for the people of God. He provides his spirit.

He provides his word. Everything we need for life and godliness is provided for us. In the way of the righteous, there are many shepherds.

Oh, there are. And in the way of the unrighteous, there are few or no shepherds. We'll get to that in a minute.

You can't get ahead of me. We're almost there. We're almost there.

So, here's what's important for us. Knowing there's many false prophets out there and that Jesus said many false prophets would arise and deceive many. Knowing that, knowing that we need to be secure so we're not led astray by the error of lawless men.

Here's what Paul said, Ephesians 5.10. Marie Garcia, can you read that for us? Ephesians 5.10. Prove by testing. Test it. Test it.

Put God's seal of approval. Make sure it has God's seal of approval. So, question then, why is it so important to prove by testing? What comes to your mind? Why can't we just, ah, our first impression.

Why is that good enough? What comes to your mind? Why is it so important to prove everything by testing? What did Jesus say about sin? He talked about sin being something very deceitful. The deceitfulness of sin. Be very careful.

Exhort one another daily so that no one is hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Sin is so deceitful that there is a way that seems right unto a man, but the ends thereof are what? Ways of death. So do you trust, do you want to just trust how you feel about it? Especially when that, taking that pill feels so good? Or especially when you, that third or fourth or fifth drink begins to numb all that anxiety you had.

You start to chill a little bit. You start to feel good and loosen up. And sin is actually pleasurable for a season.

That's why it's important to test all things. As a matter of fact, it's not in the scriptures here. Hold on for a second.

It's not in the scriptures here, but it says that the mature, solid food is for the mature who by constant use, what have they done? They train their senses to discern good and evil. It's important. You, it's you training.

I feel that part of what my calling here is your trainer. It's to help you train your senses to detect this good and evil. I know we have to, since we're going to have the Lord's supper, I'm going to leave us time.

So I'm almost, I'm getting to wrap it up. But if it's so important to test, you had better have the right thing to test with. So with, ah, that's it.

The only unchangeable, infallible, the thing that will outlast heaven and earth is the word of God. Amen. And if you don't know the word, how can you test it? What are you going to do? Call me on the phone in the middle of the night when you're in temptation.

Hey, pastor, is this okay to do this? I'd rather you do that than just make your own decision. But actually if you will test every single thing by the word of God. The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, enabled to pierce deep, dividing of soul and spirit and joints and marrows.

And you know what it does? It judges the thoughts and intents of the heart. It helps you judge what your thoughts and intents are. And that's what you need to test all things by.

But the problem is not that we don't have God's word. Yes, we have the means to test everything. But you know a lot of people don't want to test everything.

And that's what Paul said. They don't want to test everything. You remember what Jesus said? This is the verdict.

Light has come, but men love darkness rather than light. Why do they love darkness more than light? Their deeds are evil. And if your deeds are evil, you're practicing what's wrong.

Do you want the light? Take the light off me. Turn off the lights. What happens if you haven't had your house treated and you turn on the light? What do you see? And what do they do when you turn on the light? Run.

And so they like the dark. And those who do are doing evil. They don't want to be tested.

They don't want testing. And you see, God knows this. And this is where we're going to finish this message and it's going to go right into our Lord's Supper.

Paul understood this. Romans chapter 1, verse 28. You can read that for me.

Romans 1, 28. Yeah, Paul. Romans 1, 28.

Just as they did not prove by testing to have God and did not have it, God gave them over to an untested mind, a disapproved mind to do things that are not proper. The same word. Since they did not test to really make sure they knew God, God gave them over to a mind that wasn't tested.

It's filled with ideas. Oh, God is this. I believe this.

Oh, I believe this. Well, I think this. Yeah, filled with your own ideas, but they're untested and unproven by the Word of God.

And that's the danger. And when that happens, when you don't want to really know God according to what He really says, you know what God gives you? He gives you what you want. He lets you have your own idea of God.

Okay. You want to think I'm this way? More power to you. That's literally what He does.

And the last verse that I'll actually show that is in 2 Thessalonians. And this again, this is about this working of deception. How do people end up in this untested mind, this disapproved mind? Listen to this very carefully.

The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan. And he will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie. And all the ways of wickedness that deceives those who are perishing.

Notice who is being deceived. Not those who are being saved. They're not being deceived because the spirit of truth is guiding them into all truth.

Who's being deceived? Those who are perishing. Why are they perishing from there? Why are they perishing? That's right. They refuse the love of the truth.

We were unpersuaded. They heard the truth. It was presented to them and they said, no, I don't want to hear it.

I'm not coming to the light. Yes, it's similar. It's that attitude that we already know and no one's going to tell me.

That's it. We have to be aware about that. But look what happened.

They perished because they refused to love the truth. So what does God do? What does God do when they refuse to love the truth? What does he do? He actually sends them a strong delusion. All right, and here's where here's where I'm going to go with this.

He sends them something that makes them feel secure being completely wrong. So they have no sense of danger. They just go on with their life completely unaware of what's coming.

It's because they didn't want to hear it. So God just lets them alone. Now, one last question and then I'm going to we're going to tie this into our Lord's Supper.

What do you think God uses to send?

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