

Ger-18 the Kingdom of God

by Art Katz

Art Katz emphasizes the necessity of understanding the kingdom of God as a theocratic rule to restore the church's apostolic character and urgency in faith.

Duration: 1:06:24

Scripture: Proverbs 10:19, Matthew 6:33, 1 Corinthians 14:1, 1 Timothy 3:2, James 1:19, 1 Peter 4:10, Revelation 2:17

Topics: "Kingdom Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by expressing gratitude for the warm reception he always receives from the audience. He acknowledges that he may have already shared everything he has in previous sermons, but feels compelled to repeat certain teachings as they may not have been fully understood or received. The speaker then poses the question of what is the key to the kingdom, emphasizing that sacrificial living, intensive relationships, and unsparing correction are essential. He urges the audience to take the kingdom of God seriously and reevaluate their purpose and intentions, particularly in relation to the Jewish people. The speaker also cautions against excessive talking and encourages the use of fewer, more meaningful words.

Transcript

Guten Abend, Kinder. Good to be back with you. Es ist gut, wieder bei euch zu sein.

I always have a very nice reception here. Ich habe in dieser Gemeinde immer einen sehr netten Empfang bekommen. Better than I deserve.

Besser als ich es verdient habe. And kinder than in other places. Und freundlicher als an anderen Orten.

So, this must be the Lord. So, muss das vom Herrn kommen. I thought that I had already given you everything that I have.

Ich dachte, dass ich euch in der Vergangenheit schon alles gegeben hätte, was ich so habe. What could I add this time? Was kann ich denn jetzt noch hinzufügen? Although it wouldn't hurt to repeat speakings of the past. Obwohl es wäre ja nicht falsch, wenn wir Dinge von der Vergangenheit leere wiederholen würden.

Because I don't think you understood it. Denn ich glaube nicht, dass ihr alles verstanden habt. Or fully received it.

Oder vollkommen aufgenommen habt. So the repetition wouldn't hurt. So eine Wiederholung würde ja nicht schaden.

But something is growing in my spirit. Aber etwas ist dabei, in meinem Geist zu wachsen. And when you hear the theme, you'll say, but nothing special about that.

Und wenn du dann die Thematik hören wirst, wirst du sagen, aber da ist doch nichts Besonderes dran. We already know that. Das kennen wir doch schon lange.

We're already familiar with that. Damit sind wir doch schon lange vertraut. This is no new thing.

Das ist doch nichts Neues. And it's a new thing that we want. Und wir wollen doch immer was Neues haben.

A novel thing. Etwas, eine Neuigkeit irgendwo. So let me begin with a question.

So möchte ich eine Frage stellen zu Anfang. What is the key to the kingdom? Was ist der Schlüssel zum Reich Gottes? What one thing would you finger or identify as being critical to the understanding of the entire faith? Welche Sache würdest du herauspicken von all den Dingen, die so erwähnt werden, um den Glauben mit einem Wort zu umreißen? That if that one thing is omitted, nothing is rightly in its place. Wenn wir dann das eine auslassen würden, dann würde nichts wirklich an seinem richtigen Platz stehen.

Would you suggest what that one thing is? Könntest du vielleicht einen Vorschlag machen, was dieses eine wohl sein könnte? Oh, I'm sure you're thinking Israel. Nun, du denkst vielleicht sofort an Israel. Art is fishing for Israel.

Ja, der Art, der geht vielleicht ganz bestimmt, fährt auf Israel ab. That's his special interest. Das ist ein ganz besonderes Interesse.

And I have to say it now. Und ich muss sagen, nein, das ist es nicht. Well, then it must be the church.

Ja, dann muss es eben die Gemeinde sein im Allgemeinen. And you're getting warm. Ja, du wirst schon ein bisschen wärmer.

But that's not yet it. Aber das ist noch nicht die Sache. The key to the kingdom of God is the kingdom of God itself, rightly understood, rightly recognized.

Now, have you been in the faith long enough to realize certain tendencies? Bist du lange genug schon im Glauben gewesen, um gewisse Richtungen, Tendenzen zu erkennen? One is the tendency in the church to reduce to a cliché the most significant things of God. Wir haben eine Tendenz in der Gemeinde Jesu, dass wir die allerkostbarsten Dinge Gottes zu einem Klischee herabsetzen. Simply by saying it so frequently.

Indem wir es manchmal sehr oft erwähnen. The kingdom of God, the kingdom of God. Das Reich Gottes, das Reich Gottes.

Well, bless you, brother, bless you, brother. Oder sei gesegnet, Bruder, Gottes Segen, Gottes Segen. Do you want to ruin holy words? Möchtest du heilige Worte ruinieren? Speak them frequently.

Ja, dann plappern sie einfach mal so daher. And mindlessly. Ohne darüber nachzudenken.

And you will in time rob them of their entire content. Und in der Zeit wirst du sie ihres ganzen Inhalts entleeren. Do you know what part of the prophetic task is? Weißt du, was ein Teil der prophetischen Aufgabe ist? Is to be jealous over the words of God.

Es ist eifersüchtig, über das Wort Gottes zu sein. To contend for their meaning. Dass wir wirklich ihre Bedeutung aufrechterhalten.

Zum Beispiel Prophet. Was bedeutet Prophet? Ich werde müde, das Wort immer und immer wieder zu hören. Jedermann hat es auf den Lippen.

Jedermann ist heute ein Prophet. Und man prophezeit dieses und jenes und hat eine prophetische Konferenz. Wir stehen in Gefahr, einer der bedeutendsten Worte Gottes zu verlieren.

So if we're going to be a prophetic church, we need to be jealous over these words. And not allow them to come into some kind of familiar, ordinary, cheap or convenient usage. In fact, I'll even go further.

Ja, in der Tat gehe ich noch weiter. We ought to be jealous about words themselves. Even the volume of words.

I've not recovered from the Berlin conference. For the volume of words that were spoken. How the speakers took their liberty.

Nothing to inundate us for an hour and a half or more. With such a volume of words. Without any sense of economy.

You want to be a godly people? A priestly people? Which is your call? Fewer words. But more rightly spoken. More sensitively chosen.

I'm especially conscious of this. Because the prophetic integrity. And the quality of prophetic speaking.

Can be diffused by just ordinary conversation. You would think this man must be wonderful company. Oh, to drive him to the service.

Or pick him up at the airport. And engage him in conversation. Of things you've always wanted to ask such a man.

I would profoundly disappoint you. I say little or nothing. Especially on the way to the meeting.

I want to hear God. And let him form his word in my inner man. So, please be careful.

I'm already observing you have this tendency. To be voluminous with words. Voluminous.

You. They have this tendency. Make a vow.

Fewer words. More fitly spoken. In season.

And silence isn't a bad thing. We're even going to have a half hour of it in heaven. Silence can be profound.

I've seen golden moments of God lost. When someone had to break the silence. Because they could not bear it.

Something had to be said. Had to be seen. Our eyes are so voluptuous.

We're so sensual. We need to see. We need to hear.

We need to feel. We need to touch. So, is there a phrase that has become more frayed and more worn than the kingdom of God? That we use so casually.

As if everything's the kingdom. And therefore nothing is the kingdom. So, on this trip I had opportunity to have conversation with two East German pastors.

Whom I've not seen since the wall came down. And I asked them both the same question. What has changed since you have come now into the full integration with the whole of Germany? What I was really asking was.

Have you lost the sharp edge? That I remember when we came during the communist regime. When the meetings were dangerous. There might have been a spy in the audience.

And you had already been warned not to speak of Israel. You lived under a continual tension. With a justifiable fear.

Of the prospect of imprisonment, persecution. And there was a wonderful radical edge to your faith. When a man like me came, you were greatly appreciative.

Now, of course, everybody comes. And it's no special thing. So, how are you doing? And what are you doing? And what are you speaking? Now that you're not under the urgency of the previous conditions.

What dynamic has replaced it? What has saved your church and your meetings from becoming a succession of mere services? Do you understand what I was asking? Significant question. I said, have you ever considered the kingdom of God? Because the kingdom of God rightly apprehended. Brings its own dynamic.

Conveys its own urgency. And it alone has the power to convert our conventional Christianity. And restore its apostolic character.

Take my word for it. Take my word for that. I can't prove it right now.

And I don't have the time to develop it. But I want to send this statement into your midst. The issue of apostolic faith.

Are you jealous for that word? Apostolic? Or has it suffered equally with the word prophetic? What does it mean, Art? A cliché. That the word prophetic and apostolic is becoming a cliché. It means that they are words that were initially true.

But because of too frequent usage. And careless usage. It loses its content.

And its meaning. And its power. So what am I saying? That the church that is not apostolic is not the church.

It could have programs. Conferences. It's a order of services.

Interesting visiting speakers. But it will fall short of the calling of God. And of the use of God.

For those things that pertain to his coming and his kingdom. Even to be occupied with Israel. And to have an empathy for this people.

Is not necessarily a saving grace. If the affinity for Israel is conducted on the level of sentimentality. Or what is even worse.

A relief for German guilt. Well how then should we relate to Israel? Apostolically. Prophetically.

In the context in which Paul has set forth the mystery. Because that brings to the church a certain valence, a certain character, a certain dynamic. A certain expectancy.

It makes the church eschatological. Eternally minded. Because to consider Israel rightly is to consider Israel millennially.

It's more than the issue of the success of the present state. In fact in my opinion it might require the devastation and the dissolution of that state. Yeah, in my opinion.

Something that might offend you. And your understanding of God. Unless you understood the mystery.

In the context of Israel's millennial call. And the glory that will come to God. Through Israel's final restoration.

Forever. So let me take your pulse. Are you forever minded? Are you eternally minded? In the way that Paul was.

Who saw so vividly the eternal weight of glory. That he counted his present sufferings as momentary and light. This is not some idle holding of a category eternity.

It's bringing the reality and the dynamic of it into the present life. And that gives to the fellowship, the church, a texture. A certain knit.

A certain weight of value. That even the powers of darkness are required to recognize. Who have said Jesus we know and Paul we know, but who are you? Let them see a people who are eternally minded.

Who are eschatologically minded. Who know that we're moving toward an end. A conclusion and a climax.

A consummation. That eventuates in the glory of God forever. Powers of darkness will take note of such a people.

They are a threat to the kingdom of darkness. Because they are already exhibiting the kingdom of God. And it shows in their witness.

Their words have a greater power to penetrate. And also to invoke reaction against themselves. Scandalously.

Reproach and anger. You're no longer a nice guy. That you're Christians and somehow acceptable in the world.

You've become a pilgrim. A sojourner. A stranger.

In the world. In this world. The world is offensive to you.

You hate its immorality. You cannot tolerate its entertainments. You despise its political systems.

There's a cry that continually wells up in you. Come, Lord Jesus. Thy kingdom come.

Not as an escape. But as a fulfillment. In the earth.

I'm speaking by faith tonight. I'm being Christ-full. I'm just talking.

So I said to these East German pastors. Have you ever considered the kingdom of God? And I thought to myself. The proper consideration of that kingdom will more than substitute for any radical edge that communist authority had brought.

Oh, yes, they were quick to say, well, we've considered the kingdom. My son had earrings before. Smoking marijuana.

Going to the discotheque. But now he has straightened out. And the students at school recognize a difference in him.

That's the kingdom. And you would say yes. And you're right.

But not right enough. Now listen to this, children. There's a way in which we can understand the kingdom as the benefit that comes to us redemptively as believers.

Yes, significant changes have come. Isn't that what Jesus meant when he said the kingdom of God is within you? Something internal. Something personal.

Individual. Spiritual. Yes, it's true.

But it does not exhaust the truth. And doesn't even begin to touch the larger truth. So here's what I want to say to you.

And have driven all day long to come to tell you. Unless you understand the kingdom of God politically as a theocratic government, as the rule of God over the nations, you have not understood the kingdom. And the lack of that understanding seriously atrophies the church.

Even in its best charismatic forms. The understanding of the kingdom as the coming rule of God, theocratic, not democratic, changes everything. Affects everything.

Your understanding of Israel. The role and function of the church. The issue of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit.

Everything is radicalized and comes into its apostolic formation when the concept of the kingdom of God as the rule of God is restored. After all, we were told to pray, Thy kingdom come. On earth as it is in heaven.

Not an escape from the earth, but the coming of the king to the earth. This is what the Greek word *parousia* means. When we meet him in the air, it's not our escape from the earth, it's the glorified bodies given us, by which we shall rule and reign with him.

Ascending and descending upon the son of man. Ascending and descending upon the son of man. The glorified saints.

That the glorified believers ascend and descend with the son of God. In his rule over his creation. Are you anticipating that? Are you preparing for that? Will you rule over five cities or over ten? Everything depends on your qualification.

That you have attained in this life. Do you remember 1 Corinthians chapter 6? Paul was outraged. He met two Christians who were going to the world's court of law to resolve a dispute between them.

He met two Christians who were going to the world's court of law to resolve a dispute between them. Why don't you allow yourself to be defrauded? This is scandalous that you're going to the court of the law of the world. Don't you know you're going to rule over angels? Don't you know you're going to rule over nations? So what are you going to the world for? Find someone from among you.

Of the most ordinary kind. And let him resolve your dispute. I know that I know.

You are not expecting this governmental participation. You are not expecting this governmental participation. Because if we did, we would be chafed by the whole way in which the church is structured.

Elevated platforms. Theater seating. Which does not invite participation.

But passive viewing. It's not a preparation for government. You know what one of the most profound moments in my life as a believer? And I've been a believer 35 years.

25 years in community. Where we presently are. And our words are few.

But weighty. And there came a time when we had to judge a brother. His father was a distinguished Pentecostal preacher.

And the family was well known within the entire movement. But he was a rebel. And we gave him every opportunity.

Over many weeks, three months. Working with this brother. Correcting this brother.

And he was not receiving this correction. And so one went before him directly. And then two.

And he still refused correction. And we brought him before the entire church. To judge him.

And it took three hours. Solemn time. I heard housewives speak profoundly.

Because the urgency of the situation. Of having to give a man over to the devil. For the destruction of his flesh.

That his soul might be saved. Was no light question. Like, should we change the carpet of the church? Or do some construction or paint work? With what questions are God's people confronted today? In which they have to seek God.

Because the questions are consequential. And we need the wisdom of God. That is given in the counsel of the many.

Which is preparation for us. For eternal rule and reign. With Christ.

As overcomers. God makes this the great reward. If any man overcome.

I will give him a new name. And he will rule and reign with me. From my throne.

Forever. That's the ultimate reward of faith. For a life that is rightly lived in this lifetime.

Significantly lived. In the context of the kingdom of God. Of a kingdom coming.

Whose rule the world hates. Read Psalm 2. Why do the heathen rage? And imagine a vain thing. And the kings and the rulers take thought against the Lord and against his anointed.

To break their cords asunder. But God holds them in derision. He laughs.

For he said, I have set my son, the king, on the hill of Zion. And I have given him the nations for his inheritance. Psalm 2 is classic.

It's not a piece of poetry. It's a radical glimpse of the end. Of the son of God whom the father exalts.

This day I have declared the decree. Thou art my son. And I have set you on the throne of David.

On the hill of Zion. And you shall rule over the nations. Let them rage.

Let them foam at the mouth. I hold them in derision. This is my king.

And he will rule over the nations. And his overcoming saints with him. He will break the nations like a potter.

With a rod of iron. The rebellious nations. Of which Germany today is an example.

I was in Berlin. And I saw the new Reichstag building. Very impressive architecture.

They spared no expense. In the dome. But then beyond that.

In a hundred football fields. I've never seen more derricks. These operating cranes.

Hundreds of them. In one of the most massive construction undertakings I have ever seen. For which there is only one comparison.

Babylon itself. You know what, when I saw that, what that spoke to my prophetic heart. This is not a nation satisfied merely with governing itself.

It has imperial intentions. Of ruling over nations. And is providing the physical structure for that possibility.

Evidently the church has not told them. That God's wrath will be upon them. Because he has his own program.

For a righteousness in the earth. That can only issue out of one place. Not Berlin.

Or Geneva or New York. The holy hill of Zion. I have set my king on the holy hill of Zion.

He's qualified to rule there. For he's the son of David. And the father will give him all nations as his inheritance.

That's why the nations rage. The kings and the rulers. Is God being redundant? Kings and rulers? Is that like saying kings and kings? You see how you need to wear the kingdom spectacles? The kings are the

visible and earthly magistrates.

But the rulers are the principality and powers of the air. And their prince is soon to be cast out into the earth. Who knows that his time is short.

And he will ventilate his fury. On anything that will permanently dispossess him from his rule. As the false usurping god of this world.

Who will be his two objects of hatred. For destruction and annihilation. Israel and the church.

The people of God. Oh you dear saints. Can you take more? Be prepared.

For something worse than the Nazi time. That will come again to Germany. And every nation.

As Jews will be ruthlessly and relentlessly hounded unto death in the last days. By these powers of darkness. Who know something that you don't know.

That the king is contained in the heavens. Acts 3.21 Waiting for the restoration of all things spoken by the prophets since the world began. That restoration is the restoration of Israel.

The surviving remnant. Of the last days sifting of this people through all nations. The time of Jacob's trouble.

Future. But near. Let me say it.

You will say where is God. To allow this a second time. Within the same century.

And no longer confined to Europe or to Germany. A global hatred. That seeks their annihilation.

And God is allowing it. You need to understand. The subject of Israel.

In the context of the kingdom. Or you don't understand at all. And you condemn yourself to the limitation of only a sentimental relationship.

Rather than an apostolic one. You say why are Jews going to be so persecuted and hated unto destruction. Because that is the wisdom of the powers of darkness.

How to be saved from the loss of power and reigning over nations. How to save yourself from that predicament. How to save yourself from the predicament of losing your rule.

Annihilate those people. Whose restoration will bring their king and his rule. I've given you the full.

Schema the full scenario. Of the most important event of the last days. Of which only a remnant of world Jewry will survive.

And return to Zion. As the redeemed of the Lord. With everlasting joy upon their heads.

And with singing. When mourning and sighing flee away. There will not be one of them returning in that condition.

There will not be one of them returning in that condition. Except by the mercy that you extend. Don't say no one ever told you.

Don't say that no one ever told you. Are you prepared for this? Jews hated again and despised. As the Nazis used to say.

The Jews are our misfortune. And they will be the world's misfortune. Look what they have done to the world economy.

Look what their conflict in the Middle East has done to the oil situation. The Lord will allow this anti-Christ hatred. To pour out like a flood over the earth.

Will you be able to resist it? If your own standard of living has fallen. And your own physical security is threatened. They will not be so cute in that day.

So charming and so lovable. Despised and rejected of all men. Who will take them in? Who will hide them? And move them on.

To those who are prepared to receive them. As God sifts them through the nations. Who will be willing to take the risk? Of being caught.

Helping a Jew. Why take the risk? What did they ever do for you? In that day. You will realize as you have never realized.

How gentile you are. How German you are. How human, only too human.

Because crisis reveals. And absolute crisis reveals absolutely. You know what my idea of a church is? One that anticipates the soon coming realities.

And is in conscious willful preparation for them. Not only physically. But spiritually.

There's only one kind of people who will help Jews in that time. Those who do not hold their lives as dear unto themselves. And if it should require their life.

Which is a very reasonable possibility. Because that's what will move Jews to jealousy. German gentiles willing to risk their life for me.

At a time when I'm hated everywhere. This is beyond religion. This is the evidence of another kingdom.

That has already come. And it's the kingdom of the God of Jacob. So I can see it's Hebraic character.

And it's selfless priestliness. Exhibited through gentiles. We are on a historic collision course.

To this end. Israel is already in preparation. Do you think Ehud Barak is going to save Israel? Silly kinder.

Don't you understand? Why he had to be elected? Because he has a 180 IQ. He's smarter than me. Much smarter.

And much braver. He's the outstanding hero of Israel. And held the highest military position as general.

He has a master's degree from Stanford University. And he's a classical pianist. This is a supreme man.

With supreme human endowments. And if he can't save Israel. Who can? There's a coming devastation, children.

Haifa, Tel Aviv, Tiberias, Jerusalem. Will be destroyed. They will be left without inhabitant.

They will say, the land has become our destruction. They will be cast out as captive. You will not be able to believe it.

That God has allowed this death. To this hope. For statehood.

Don't Jews deserve it after all these years? Yeah, if you think humanly. But in terms of the kingdom. This is a preparation.

For a nation of sons. Who are restored to the land. With a new and everlasting covenant.

In a divine character which is given. That Jerusalem is called the city of righteousness. How else shall the king rule from there? Unless it first becomes that.

Well, there's so much more that can be said. But I don't know about your capacity. It has been diminished by too much speaking.

A prophetic man is coming. And we can take all the time. Full opportunity for worship, for announcements.

And if there's anything left over. In the ability of God's people to yet hear more. Then we'll try it.

When you take the kingdom of God seriously. As indeed we ought. Everything will come under reconsideration.

What we are about. Why we are about it. What is God's intention for us? In this nation in particular.

If we can anticipate this dealing with Jews. What manner of people ought we to be? Seeing this kingdom and this glory. It will bring a new seriousness to the church.

That even our children will recognize. What tonight in front of the TV set. Or worse.

Because what they are engaged in is much more compelling. Than what we are about. See them as the index.

Of the truth of our condition. They're not impressed. Let alone engaged.

Because this is just another adult culture. But it is not the kingdom of God. That requires sacrificial living.

That requires intensive relationship. That requires unsparing correction. Even judging a brother.

As we did that afternoon so many years ago. And I watched ordinary housewives. Rise to the occasion.

With an intensity and a wisdom. That astonished me. And when the trial was over.

They did not go back to where they were before. Something qualitative had happened for them. That moves them from faith to faith.

From glory to glory. When the conditions of our life are earnest. We gave that brother's flesh over to the devil.

And we were in our prayer. Morning prayer time when I watched him leave the property. With his clothes on a stick on his shoulder.

And I rejoiced. There was a joy of the Lord. That everyone felt.

Because we had judged with righteous judgment. We need to save the kingdom of God from becoming a cliché. We need to save the kingdom of God from becoming a cliché.

It's a government coming. Desperately needed. Hasn't the Serbian, Croatian, and what's the other country? Kosovo crisis shown you? How far men will go? In their arrogance and conceit? In their nationalistic and ethnic superiority? To kill indiscriminately? And rape helpless girls? In the face of their fathers and their sons and brothers? As a policy of war? And we're going to live with that kind of government? Think that it can be improved? And I'm not crying out? Thy kingdom come.

Come Lord Jesus. Let there be righteousness in earth and heaven. And until you come.

We're going to speak up in behalf of righteousness. We're not going to be silent as the church. We're not going to allow society, and government, and culture, and entertainment have its way.

We're going to stand for truth. We're going to speak of issues that need to be identified. We're going to call governments to acknowledge God who created the heavens and the earth.

Not that we should hope it will succeed. But how can we remain silent? How does one become an overcomer? There needs to be something to overcome. Opposition.

Persecution. Rejection. And you'll experience that.

In exact proportion to the degree that the kingdom has come. In your thought. In your convictions.

In your expectations. I want to pray for such a church. Thy kingdom come.

Something more than the eternal, internal, and personal benefit. Something much larger. Of which the angel Gabriel spoke to Mary.

The Holy Spirit will hover over you. And you will conceive a son. And he shall be very great.

And his father will give him the throne of David. And he will rule over the house of Jacob. For ever.

The first angelic pronouncement has to do with Jesus and his government. And it's for us Jews. Unto us a child is born.

Unto us a son is given. And he shall be called Counselor Wonderful, the Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. And of the increase of his government.

And of his peace. There shall be no end. Wherever you look.

Once you put these spectacles on. Is the issue of rule. Governance over the nations.

Over the church. Is your rule upon his shoulder? Do you determine your own vacations? Whom you're going to marry? What career you choose to pursue? Of course the Lord wants you to be successful. So I don't have to submit this to him.

It's only a small thing. Really? There's no small thing in the kingdom. At all.

God's waiting for a church. Whose government is upon his shoulder. Even the order of the meetings.

The content of them. The way the time is used in them. Needs to be sensitively put before the Lord.

As King. For of the increase of his government and of his peace. There shall be no end.

Can you pray thy kingdom come? It's a radical prayer. Let's pray for it. Lord.

Precious God. Grow us up. Bring this realization to our hearts.

That you're bringing many sons to glory. Many to be overcomers. To rule and reign with you from your throne.

Give us opportunity now. To come into that maturity. Into that responsibility.

That the church might be the church. And your kingdom come. To the church first.

And then also to the nations. Help us Lord. Shake us Lord.

Revive the great words. The great words. Give us a jealousy for them.

An understanding. A courage to pursue it. A faith to believe for it.

In all things. Small and great. Thy kingdom come.

In this earth. As in heaven. Amen.

Amen.

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