

Mormonism 05

by Gordon Fraser

Mormons use Scripture to support their doctrine and teachings, but often take verses out of context or use selective quoting to make their point.

Duration: 40:16

Scripture: Isaiah 3:14, Isaiah 7:14, Jeremiah 1:5, Matthew 6:33, 1 Corinthians 8:5-6, 1 Corinthians 15:35

Topics: "False Religions", "Salvation By Faith"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker recounts a conversation with a student who had been given a challenge to answer a question. The student describes a vision he had where he saw a book made of golden bricks. The speaker questions the practicality of such a heavy book and challenges the student's belief that salvation comes from one's own efforts. The speaker then discusses another vision the student had three years later, where he saw an angel named Moroni. The sermon ends with a mention of the angel Moroni being depicted on top of temples.

Transcript

You're all familiar with the Book of Mormon, as you know, there is such a thing. And it has gone into, of course, many millions of copies. There's never been a book that has sold in stores nobody wants to buy.

They force it on you, or free you into getting a copy of it. I have never yet bought a Book of Mormon, but I have had half a dozen of them given to me at different times, various editions. I have some of the older editions, and one of the interesting points of it is that sometimes they change the text from time to time.

And things become embarrassing to them, they change the text without making any footnotes or anything else. And sometimes if you quote something from some of their writings, they will say that it doesn't say that in my copy, and they will show you their copy which, to me, doesn't show it. So I told them mine and say, all right, now why did they change it from this one to this one without making any footnotes? This isn't a very good way of writing it, this is dishonest.

Anyway, they do have, they have written many, many books, apart from their sacred books. But the sacred books of Mormonism, there's the set of them, that's what I want to talk about tonight. Why should we know about them, and what should we know about them? Every young Mormon is trained to close off any conversation with you if he's come to the point where he doesn't want to talk to you anymore by putting his hand on his chest, which is part of making their witness, as they call it.

He puts his hand on his chest, and he has a burning in his bosom. He's burning in the bosom, and they say, I know, and they roll their eyes heavenward, I know that the book is true. I know that the book of Mormon is the word of God, and it goes to the prophet God.

It's always the same. They never bury their witness. It doesn't matter whether it's the presiding bishop or the youngest missionary.

This is what they're taught to say. And on one occasion, I just thought that the old nature was rising in me, and I told the fellow about burning in his bosom, the rollers, to tell facts. And he didn't appreciate it.

He just didn't call. But anyway, first of all, the reason we're doing this is this. They'll come to you with their sacred books and say, these are the word of God.

There also have been the King James Version. So you might say there is the set of their sacred writings. Why the King James Version? Why not one of the later versions? Well, the reason is that the King James Version is the one that the writer of the book of Mormon used when he was writing the book of Mormon.

And in it we find transcribed 22 chapters from the King James Version, verbatim, listed and put in the book of Mormon. They have this slight note as they quote. They say, for instance, let me find one of them here.

They'll have the chapter quoted, the heading and all the rest of it. And then in the footnote, they'll have he also Isaiah chapter so and so. In other words, there's a direct quotation from that chapter in Isaiah.

And they have them continuously from the 3rd chapter of Isaiah through the 14th, and then the 53rd chapter and several others. They have a number of chapters from Isaiah. That seems to be very popular with them.

And other versions. The Sermon on the Mount, they have that. So you see, they're stuck with the King James Version, because that's the version that Joseph Smith had in his hands when he was writing the book of Mormon.

And I was much told of that. So they will bring the King James Version with them. Now, they will use quotations from the King James Version.

Wherever they can find a verse or part of a verse that seems to uphold their particular doctrine, they will use it. And they will very carefully use only the words that they want to use as a precept. For instance, in the 8th chapter of 1 Corinthians, where it says, where there are Lord's many and God's many.

This is in brackets in Corinthians. And there's a totally explanatory note that they use this as a solid test to prove that there are many gods. And so on down through the line.

They will use just the parts of the verse that they want to quote. Now, as you're dealing with them, the thing to do when the moment they suggest that the verse is flipped through, make them turn to it in the King James Version and use the entire portion out loud. That is, make them do that.

I say, you know, you're not going to get away until you use that entire portion. See what it says. But of course, after they've read it, they realize that it doesn't hold up their doctrine at all.

And it isn't talking about that. Now, all of them think this is one thing you can always do. You have the perfect right to do it when they suggest anything like this.

To make them repeat to you, now, who is that talking to? Well, they probably really don't know. I say, oh, they're talking to the Corinthian priests, they say. What are they talking about? For instance, say, in the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians, there's an explanatory note.

Paul says, what shall we say then of them who baptize for the dead? And they say, this proves that baptism in the dead is something that Paul taught. He's in the ancient tense. He's not talking about the baptism in the dead, he's talking about the resurrection.

This is the subject matter of the text. So it's just that they realize that they're borrowing something, that the subject matter is the resurrection, not the subject of baptism for the dead. Now, in the first chapter of Jeremiah, for instance, they use part of that verse to prove that we all existed before we came here.

Because the Lord said to him, in the fifth verse, in the first chapter of Jeremiah, Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee, and before thou camest out of the womb, I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. Now, they say, how could he do that if we weren't in existence before we were born? Well, of course, Paul didn't do it. What's he talking about? He was talking about the foreknowledge of God, not the preexistence of man.

And they can come to that point. This, of course, not the prophet. I'll tell you.

In the ninth chapter of John's Gospel, they will use the conversation there, the disciples, as they were talking about this man who was born blind. His disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man or his parents? That he was born blind. How could he sin before he was born if he didn't exist? So, they took this into making you believe that you all existed before birth.

Now, this, of course, on the surface, has a little problem. But, when we realize who it was that was teaching, we realize that these were Jews that were teaching, and the Jews, the Orthodox Jews, many of them to this day, believe that the unborn child can sin while in a covered room. They teach that.

The old rabbis are very firm about this. And, of course, there are recent arguments about when does the person start to exist? And they finally decided at conception. So, the Jews went further and said, this child is conscious and it can sin while it's in its mother's womb.

And that's what they're talking about here. Jesus' explanation, of course. Now, this is the way they use the scriptures.

So, whenever they come up with a verse or scripture, it makes them change the subject and discuss that. What's he talking about? What's the subject matter? Who's it written to? At what time? For what purpose? And considering what goes before and what follows, according to Schindler's little formula. Now, this is something that we want to do, as they suggest the use of the Bible.

They use it where it fits their purpose. You will, of course, come to a conclusion. For instance, by grace, are we saved through faith? And that matters itself.

If it's a gift of God, not a verse left in line for both. So, what do you do with that? Is it already translated correctly? How do you know? I feel it in here. So, how do you get around that? Okay? This is their evidence, the only evidence they have.

I usually ask them, do you understand the Greek? Well, they say, no, I don't. They understand all the implications of this thing they've done, of course, because they don't believe in the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith. And they have a verse over in 2 Nephi, we are saved by grace after all that we can do.

I had an occasion a year ago at the University of Wyoming. They have a little bookstore there that's run by 50 students, universities. This is a chance to get people into the little bookstore and have a conversation with them over a cup of coffee and a stick of gum or something, you know.

And they use it as a means of winning students on the campus. It was very successful. We have about, oh, we have about eight of them now on different campuses, different times.

But anyway, the young folks there knew I was coming through and they said, would you come and hold a meeting with us for the benefit of the Mormons? I said, you like it. So they set up an evening in the University Campus and announced this treaty, particularly for the Mormon students. Well, when we got there, there were 35 Mormon students in the audience and about 35 Christian students.

This body was divided. And with these 35 Mormon students came the director of their Institute of Religion, which is on the campus and is there for the purpose of teaching Mormonism to young people. And the person in charge is usually a graduate student who is prolonging his days at the University by taking one subject a year until he manages to get through.

That's his full-fledged degree. But this was one of the professors on the campus, a PhD, a man about, I suppose, 45 years old. And he came to see that everything went their way.

Well, I had prepared for that message, for that situation, by I wrote a little tract about the size of this, and it was particularly geared to the Mormons. They believe, according to the Book of Mormon, that the American Indians are the descendants of the people who wrote the Book of Mormon. We can talk about that a little later.

They called them the Lamanites, the early Indians. And they have a Lamanite ward, for instance, where they have enough of a church of Indians in an area to have a separate church. They have a Lamanite ward.

We have a former Lamanite in our student body of Flagstaff. He was a Kewaw Indian from New Mexico. He was an altruistic priest in the Mormon faith in that village.

He was also a priest of the native religion, which is pure demonism. He got saved. He came to our school, and he's very vocal in this matter.

And I said, didn't it bother you to be a priest of the native religion and also a priest of the Mormon church? He said, no, I couldn't see any difference. Well, anyway, I took four case histories of students at the school who had been rescued from the gutter, just absolutely from the gutter. Unreclaimable.

That type of people that the police were just wishing they would die so they could be rid of them. They were constantly showing up and throwing them in a junk tank and out of it, and they wished they'd go away. Well, I took four of these case histories, and I showed how that all four of these had been won to the Lord through the efforts of our Indian students who went down to the jail regularly twice a week, regularly.

And then, how that they had come to school, had studied the Word, and after they were through with their schoolwork, they had been completely rehabilitated and then went out in full-time Christian work. Well, I asked the question, what would you tell these people from the Book of Mormon, the Holy Grail Christ, the doctrines of which that would reclaim those lives? Well, the students got the idea. They found out what I was trying to tell them, and none of them bothered me at the end.

Of course, each one of our Christian students, I told one of them, and was working with him very vigorously, while the bishop came up and talked to me. He said, you gave us something of a challenge tonight. I said, yeah, I didn't say that intentionally.

He said, I just don't know how I could answer you at this point. I said, I guess not. I think this is a challenge that you have a great deal of difficulty with answering.

So he said, we do have a verse of Scripture that's similar to what you teach. And I said, what is that? He started plumbing, and I helped him find the place. I don't know where it was.

He hasn't had a chance. Is this the verse you mean? You're saved by grace after all that you can do? And, yes, that's the verse. And I said, all right, let's look at it for a moment.

Have you always done everything that you could do up to this point? He said, no, none of it was perfect. I said, do you think that from now on, you're in middle age, do you think from now on, from the end of your life, you'll be able to do everything that you could do? Well, he said, that's asking a lot. I said, well, then you don't have anything to stand on at all.

Because it's only after you do all that you can do that that verse supplies the grace to salvation. Well, he was just a little apologetic. The poor fellow, he was suffering.

And I said, besides that, I said, don't you think that the person who wrote that there in 482 B.C. was looking at the second chapter of Ephesians and paraphrasing it when he wrote that. Well, he said, we are having some problems with the Book of Mormon, as we sure are. And at that point, he tried to close off the discussion and get out of there.

But I'm hoping that he will examine his life and see that there's many things that he could have done that he didn't do. Therefore, he's not saved, and he has no chance for salvation. Anyway, this shows you the importance of being alert to the use of Scripture.

When they use Scripture, and be sure that they're not quoting it from Doctrine and Covenants. Some of it sounds very familiar. Be sure that you make them turn to this portion and read it thoroughly and examine it before you go on to the next point.

This, of course, slows them down very much. And sometimes you can get a barb under their skin. And that's one of the ways we have of reaching them.

If we can somehow or other get a question in their mind, we can go on from there. It may take six months. It may take six years.

But that question remains in their mind until it's settled one way or another. So bear this in mind. This is the use of the Bible in Mormonism.

They say this is a sacred book, insofar as it is translated correctly. They always leave that umbrella so that if something doesn't fit them, they say, oh, but that isn't translated correctly. How do you know? Well, I've seen it in my book that that is not correctly translated.

So, so much for that. Now, back in 1820, Joseph Smith tells that he had a vision. And in that vision, we won't go into that either.

I think we discussed it one other night. The vision cannot be proved to be true because there's no evidence, there's no witnesses, and the dates are utterly confused. There are four different versions of the story with at least three different dates.

So they cannot pinpoint that and say, this we know happened on such and such a day because so-and-so saw it happen. There's no such thing. But anyway, we got the vision that the church was completely corrupt, that all of the church's doctrines were corrupt and delusional, and that all of their pastors were impostors and all of their followers were goons that didn't know what they were doing.

We're going to have to set that paraphrase lower. All right. This is what they do as told in the first vision.

Then, three years later, which was 1823, he tells that on a certain night he was in his bed and the vision came to him. And the whole room became lighter than the daylight, the sun and the daylight of noon, and an angel appeared to him, the angel Moroni. The angel Moroni is seen blowing his trumpet on top of all of the temples.

They watched and raised the statue of Moroni up on the Seattle Temple. It was quite an exciting moment. It was pathetic.

It looked like a cylinder's fire, and it goes way up. It was visible for miles. They got it at the point where two freeways meet, and you can't help but see this thing.

But they were raising Moroni with a jancy train and setting him on top. And it was a windy day, and the thing was swaying around there, and some of us were just wishing that somehow poor old Moroni would drop to the ground. But he didn't.

They got him up there, blowing his trumpet. He's the one that appeared to Joseph Smith and told him that there were certain golden plates hidden in a chest in the hill tomorrow, which is the name that they supplied to it. It didn't have any name before because it wasn't significant enough to have a name.

Just told him it was a mound in a cow pasture, and it's about 0.04 miles long and maybe 200 feet high. We wouldn't even consider it a mountain. In our country, we don't call them mountains because they're over 5,000 feet high.

But anyway, this is where he would find the plates, and he just don't know where to go and look for them. And that they were the message from God which contained the fullness of the everlasting gospel. That's the terminology they used.

This was the fullness of the everlasting gospel. And he would be permitted to get it and translate it so that this new church that he had in mind could have its literature. Well, the angel repeated this situation three times that same night, and Joseph Smith was quite exhausted the next day from listening to the message of the angel Moroni.

If he had the vision, it must have been a demon possession because it had all of the descriptions the instructions that are given by those who have experienced demonism. But at any rate, he went out and soon enough he found a chest in the hill tomorrow, a cement chest with a list that he tied up and soon up there was the golden plate and the urn in front of him and the sword of Laban and a pair of spectacles that he would use to translate the book. Now, he wasn't permitted to take them home within that time, but he was to visit that spot every year until the angel gave him permission to take them.

In 1827, the angel said, all right, now you can take the plate. And so he tells about taking them home and hiding them and first of all, he hid them under the hearth. He dug up some of the stones and hid them in there and then later he moved them to a cooper shop across the road and hid them under great bales of flax and so forth.

And finally that, he didn't take the place enough but he hid them in a hollow log in the woods. And he had a great time teaching his teachers. The reason for this was that he had been the head of a band of treasure seekers and they all thought if he had a treasure they wanted him to be cut in on.

So he had to hide it. And they tell about the mobs chasing him and all the rest of it, quite a hectic situation, shooting at him and what not. Well, he describes the plate as a book of golden plates that were seven inches wide, eight inches high and six inches thick on golden rings.

That's what a ring binder would have. Well, they figured out that much gold would weigh 420 pounds. And yet he had rings like this, it was a brick.

One case, he was running away from the crowd that was chasing him through the woods. He'd gone out into the woods to get this and he took it and put it under his arm and ran three miles with the golden plates under his arm, 420 pounds. He tried sometimes.

Tried to carry him across the threshold. He was quite a guest. He knocked down two adversaries on it, jumped over a log and finally arrived home out of breath.

I think he was. But anyway, this is the sort of legend that grew up around these golden plates. And one of our brethren in San Diego, a man who was at one time a Mormon from the Icelandic polygamist colony up in southern Utah, he became saved as we listened to the preaching of H.A. Ironside and others.

And it's a very special brother. We worked together very closely. But he made a complete book.

Not out of gold, but he made it out of the closest thing to it. He made it out of lead. And it doesn't weigh quite as much as gold would weigh, but he has a challenge out.

He'll pay \$1,000 to anyone that will run two miles with that under his arm. Well, of course, he has no takers. And he delights in setting up a booth right next to the Mormon booth at the trade fair, for instance, with his challenge blazoned up there.

He has no takers. But anyway, that's the golden plate that they talk about. Now, at a certain point, the angel told him to go ahead and cancel it.

Incidentally, the angel, as we have deducted from, let's say, circumstantial evidence, is none other than a man by the name of Sidney Rigdon, who later on became Joseph Smith's theologian. The reason we think that this is so, Sidney Rigdon was an associate of Alexander Campbell, who was starting the Restoration

Movement, which has now developed into what we know as the Church of Christ, the Disciples of Christ, and the Christian Church, in the north, these three that we call the Campbellite sects. Sidney Rigdon was one of his evangelists for a period of ten years, and he covered the area from Rutland County, Vermont, across to Albany, and the route of the Erie Canal, which was being completed at that particular time, and on across along the north, or the south shore of Lake Ontario, as far as Cleveland, Ohio.

Cleveland, Ohio, is now. And he repeatedly was on that purpose, that was his purpose, preaching. And all of these folks, Joseph Smith and the rest of them, knew him intimately.

Everybody connected with the Book of Mormon, and the beginning of the Church, knew Sidney Rigdon, but the Mormons today would say they didn't know a thing about Sidney Rigdon until a few years after the Book of Mormon finished. Well, two men, Charlie Pratt and Oliver Cowdery, as soon as the book was completed, they were sent on a mission to the Book of Mormon to sell the Book of Mormon, preach the everlasting gospel. And the first person they went to was Sidney Rigdon in Kirkland, Ohio.

At first, he said to the Christ in Dignity that there was a book that would be competing with the Bible. He said, no, we can't accept that. Two days later, they came back, and he said, oh yes, this is the revelation from God.

And within three weeks, he had baptized his entire congregation into the Mormon Church. And then it turns out, later on, I've read this in one of the biographies of this man, Charlie Pratt, that both Charlie Pratt and Oliver Cowdery had been members of his congregation two years before. So they all knew the whole plot, they knew the whole thing from beginning to end.

But yet today, the Mormons have it all covered up with their story that is repeated endlessly by their missionaries and by their people that Sidney Rigdon knew nothing about until after the whole thing was consummated. Tom Brody, who wrote a very splendid book on Joseph Smith, No Man Knows My History, it has become a bestseller in its field. If you get a copy of it, even if it is \$9, well, you get it.

It's one of the best coverages. He is the niece of Dr. McKay, who was president of the Mormon church about two presidents back, an old man who died at the age of 94. Completely senile, but he was still alive, and so they set him up in the president's chair as long as they could set him there.

Finally, he did die. But anyway, Tom Brody was his niece. She was a Mormon, and she had access to all the archives, and she wrote the story and had it completed before they realized that she was doing what she was doing, and now they hate her like poison.

But anyway, she has a calendar of the activities of this man, Sidney Rigdon. And every time there was a problem that came up with Joseph Smith and the writing of the Book of Mormon, he was absent from his parish for a period of about six to eight weeks, time enough to get up to Palmyra, New York, and the Faculty of Heritage, and get back, always undercover in a serious sort of a figure. Well, the circumstantial evidence is too great to dismiss.

This is how this man entered into the picture, and he was an engineer that engineered the Book of Mormon and talked to the story of the golden plate, had Joseph Smith dig for them, and so forth. And his doctrine is what we find in the Book of Mormon, including quite a long article in the Book of Mormon, a long story about Melchizedek, all of his boyhood and his manhood and all the rest of it. Why? So that they could later on use the Melchizedek priesthood, you see, because here it is in the Book of Mormon.

Obviously, in the language of this man, Sidney Riggins. So, it's a canary, in this case, from the beginning, and we assume that he was the one that visited Joseph Smith and told him where the plate contracted the story, because it soon was announced that the Book of Mormon had been found in this chest that was hidden in the side of the steel tribes. All of his buddies that had been treasure hunting with him before, they got up a party and they went over every inch of that mountain to see if they could find the place where the earth had been disturbed, where this chest might have been buried, and they found nothing.

And nobody has ever found anything since. Where are the golden plates? Well, an angel came and took them away the day after he finished translating them, so that he wouldn't exploit the gold that was in them. This is a handy little story.

It's always a good thing they say in the Bible that we don't have the original document. How do you know it's right? There are verses and documents in the Book of Mormon. Oh, the angel came and got them, which is a very likely story.

Anyway, here was this book of plates. Joseph Smith and his associates, first of all, a man by the name of Martin Harris, who was going to pay for the printing of the book, Martin Harris, and his own wife, Emma Smith, and a man by the name of Jacob Whitman, all helped to write the manuscript, the first 127 pages of it. Then Martin Harris, his wife, was wondering where all the money was going out of the household, and she didn't like it.

She said, I want to see those plates. I want to see the manuscript that you've got. And so Joseph finally allowed Martin Harris to take this part that was translated home with him to show to his wife.

Well, he had it in a dresser drawer after she had looked at it and so forth and thought nothing more odd for the moment when he went to get it. It was gone. And the prediction is that Mrs. Harris just threw it in the fire.

Well, then they had a predicament, because now they'd have to translate it over again, and they wouldn't know that it would come out the same way as it did the first time. So Joseph Smith got a revelation from the Lord that he wasn't to translate that part again for fear that enemies would take advantage of them and so forth. So this part would be supplemented by another document that would have the same material only in a briefer form.

So that's the way they got hold of it. Well, it's interesting that Sidney Rigdon was away from home when that event took place for a period of eight weeks. Chances are he was right there and they were figuring out what to do to cover up this blunder.

And Mrs. Harris never did say what happened to them. She finally left him because he mortgaged the farm for \$3,500 to pay for the printing of the Book of Mormon, and even that was a problem because he didn't dig it up as quick as he might have, and Joseph Smith had to get a revelation from the Lord telling him to pay the printer, or else dire curses would be upon his head. It's one of the most violent doctrines in the Doctrine and Covenants.

This order for Martin Harris to pay the printer, and thus redeem his soul from destruction. This was going on from 1827 until 1830 when the book was finally finished. That is the text of the Book of Mormon.

Well, the problems they had, the greatest problem that Joseph Smith had was to keep the plates hidden so that nobody would see them. And there's no evidence that any human being ever saw those golden

plates. They just didn't see them.

Well, I read last night the report of the two men who later on they had witnessed and heard that they had seen the plates that an angel descended from heaven and showed them to them, and they could see that it was a very ancient manuscript and that it was translated correctly, which of course none of them could do because most of them were illiterate. They wouldn't have known whether it was bona fide characters or not. But anyway, the three men who are used as witnesses, their testimony would not stand up even in a kangaroo court.

It's just absolute foolishness. But Joseph Smith wrote the testimony for them and had them sign it. Now they will say these men never went back on their work, although they all left the church.

Well, they did go back on their work. They said, we saw them by the eye of faith. We saw the plates by the eye of faith.

I remember when I was in college studying philosophy, the philosopher Barclay had this proposition that if you could visualize the thing, you couldn't believe it was there unless you could visualize it. And if you could visualize it, then you could trace it down and probably it was real. Well, by this prophecy, you could visualize a unicorn.

You could tell me what one looks like. It looks kind of like a horse and has a horn out of its forehead. But are there unicorns? No.

Even if you can visualize them, describe them. Well, that's as much evidence there is that the plates were actually seen by these men. It had to be an angel that came and showed them unto them.

They couldn't, he couldn't. He'd been translating them according to his own words for two and a half years, with them there all the time. Yet when the day came to show them to these witnesses, he couldn't produce them.

He had to produce an angel from hell in the woods where the light shines down. It's a very beautiful spot. I've seen it down there at Calmyra.

Beautiful hardwood trees and the light of the early morning sun comes piercing down and rays down through the woods and lights up the ground. You could easily pull off a sea ant there if you had the least bit of superstition. My grandson noticed the day last year and we had a great time asking questions around the headquarters there.

And they finally disappeared and let us disappear as fast as we could. Well, I'm sorry, but there is just that much of the old nature in me that I like to heckle these people with some things that they can't explain. I guess I'll be forgiven for this.

I don't know. I hope I'll be forgiven. But anyway, the golden plates, they have to believe that those golden plates are there.

They have to believe that the Book of Mormon is the Word of God. But it can't be good Mormon. This is the pledge.

If a young fellow is in danger of defecting and they are reinstating him, they will ask the question, Do you believe the Book of Mormon to be the Word of God? Yes. Do you believe Joseph Smith to be the Prophet

of God? Yes. They don't say, Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior? They never ask that question.

So all this is about Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon. So that's the importance of the Book. Alright, what is the situation with the golden plates? Question number one.

Hey, look at the time go by. Shall we take a break now? Alright, let's take a break for five minutes and we'll come back to this. How sad and distressed with the golden plates in my hand for five minutes.

We'll have some questions after this. I'll wind this up pretty quick after we come back.

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