

Mark - on the Way to Gethsemane

by J. Glyn Owen

Jesus, as the Prophet, Priest, and King, knew the hearts of men, the scriptures, and the plan of God, and he faced his impending death with courage and self-mastery.

Duration: 46:31

Scripture: Zechariah 13:7, Matthew 26:31-32, Mark 14:27-31, Luke 22:31-32

Topics: "Gethsemane"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of seeing Jesus clearly in order to worship and represent Him effectively. The speaker uses the narrative of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness to illustrate this point. Jesus, despite being tempted by the devil three times, rebuts and fights back with the word of God. The speaker highlights the significance of Jesus' knowledge of scripture in overcoming temptation. The sermon also focuses on Jesus' prediction that His disciples will fall away, particularly Peter's denial of Him. The speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding and accepting Jesus' words, even when they are difficult to hear.

Transcript

Now let us turn together prayerfully to the gospel recorded by Mark and the passage indicated in Mark chapter 14 verses 27 to 31. I'll read the passage again, though I'm sure it's very familiar to all of us. May I say for those who are visiting us that we have arranged our morning worship so that we are meditating at this time, meditating on what Mark records as the movement of our Lord to Gethsemane, to the cross, to be the bearer of our sins and ultimately towards his glorious resurrection.

And we are considering the record of the last few days in his earthly life before he died as recorded by Matthew. Now let me read then verses 27 to 31. You will all fall away, Jesus told them, for it is written, I will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered.

But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee. Peter declared, even if all fall away, I will not. I tell you the truth, Jesus answered, today, yes, tonight, before the rooster crows twice, you yourself will disown me three times.

But Peter insisted emphatically, even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you. And all the others said the same. So though Peter was the spokesman, he evidently uttered words and sentiments that were felt by the others as well as himself.

Now the scene here is the Mount of Olives. Probably the disciples, having moved out from the setting where the Passover feast was held and where our Lord instituted the Lord's Supper, probably they have now arrived near to what was called the Grove of Gethsemane, on the verge of what we speak of as the Garden of Gethsemane proper. Our text divides itself very simply.

Though it's a very important narrative and very challenging, the division here is very simple. First of all, Jesus announced the imminent falling away of the eleven in fulfillment of a prophecy made by Zechariah in chapter 13 and verse 7. Then Jesus followed that with a remarkable promise. I find this one of the most remarkable utterances in its context that we find anywhere in the Bible.

Having said that He Himself is to be smitten or stricken by God, and by that He meant that He was going to die, and the sheep would be scattered, then Jesus said, but after I have risen I will go ahead of you into Galilee. And He makes an appointment with His disciples for a time after He has risen from the dead. Then there follows the dialogue with Peter.

The dialogue with Peter includes something like this. Jesus tells him that He Himself is really going to come to trouble because He is going to deny Jesus three times that night. Peter, of course, says no, it's impossible.

Though all the rest of them are scattered and run away, you can count on me, He says. To which Jesus said, no, no, He says, Peter, if you only knew yourself, you, even you yourself, you're going to deny Me three times this very night before the rooster crows twice. But Peter wouldn't have it.

Now, those are the facts, the simple facts that are woven into the tapestry of this passage. I want us this morning, however, to see something that is beyond the facts themselves. We're not going to treat the facts as unimportant.

We're going to look at them. But there is a portrait of Jesus that is emerging here, not only in this passage but in many other too. And I don't want us to miss this threefold portrait of our Lord to which we've referred many times in previous days.

But we need to see this portrait coming through at this stage in His life, namely the portrait of Jesus as the prophet, as the priest, and as the king. And if only we can see that, if only we can see this amazing emergence of our prophet Lord, our sovereign Savior, and of the one infallible high priest praying for His soon to be disciples. I think we shall have something very precious with which to face a new week and to continue our lives, I trust, as disciples of this same prophet, priest, and king.

Now, the first thing then is Jesus taking the role of the prophet. And as such, He predicts certain things. He predicts here the imminent fulfillment of prophecy, a prophecy from the Old Testament.

Jesus takes it up and He prophesies, He predicts that that Old Testament prophecy is now going to be fulfilled. Let me stress, Jesus has been assuming the prophetic role all along. In the passage preceding this, we are now considering, He prophetically announced in verse 18 of chapter 4, He prophetically announced that one of the twelve would betray Him.

Then He further proceeded to announce that He would not again drink of the fruit of the vine until He would do so anew, as Luke tells us, with them in the kingdom of God. And in the verses now before us, Jesus predicts the imminent fulfillment of that prophecy found in Zechariah chapter 13 and verse 7. You will all fall away, Jesus told them, because it is written. And what is written must happen.

God has ordained it. It is in the plan, it is in the purpose. The Lord of all creation has said it and He has planned it.

You will all fall away, because it is written, I will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered abroad. Now this passage in Mark clearly portrays therefore a representation of Jesus as the supreme teacher, the infallible prophet, who knew, as we shall see in a moment, knew those whom He was teaching, knew what was to be taught, and knew what He wanted to say to them in order to save them in this evil hour. It's the supreme teacher that we have here in the first place.

Now as teacher, I want you to notice first that our Lord Jesus knew His disciples. He knew His disciples. It's very necessary for the ideal teacher to know the folk that he's teaching, know their capacity, know where they stand at a given moment, know where they are in order to take them forward.

And our Lord most certainly knew where His disciples were just now. Now if you go back to the Old Testament and consider this question of the knowledge of men, you will find that in many places in the Old Testament this is an attribute of God. The Old Testament stresses this.

The knowledge of man is an attribute of God. God knows us and He's the only one that really knows us and knows us all together, knows every one of us and knows each and all of us through and through. It is an attribute of God, a divine attribute.

Let me just remind you of one or two passages. We read in Jeremiah chapter 17 and verse 10, I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve. That's a staggering picture to those who take God seriously.

I search the heart. I scrutinize the mind. And He does so in order that there should be no injustice in His attitude toward His creatures.

Or take this perhaps far more familiar word which brings out the same truth. You remember the words of Psalm 139. O Lord, says the psalmist, you have searched me and you know me.

You know when I sit down and when I rise. You perceive my thoughts from afar. You see this is what Jeremiah said God was doing and the psalmist says it's true.

You perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down. You are familiar with all my ways.

Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O Lord. You hem me in behind and before. You have laid your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. Where can I go from your spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens you're there. If I make my bed in the depths you're there.

If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me and your right hand will hold me fast. If I say surely the darkness will hide me and the light will become night around me. Even the darkness will not be dark to you.

The night will shine like the day for darkness is as light to you. Have you got the picture? God knows every man. He knows a man in the dark and he knows a man in the light.

He knows a man when he sits down and gets up, goes to bed and sleeps and rises again. There is no solitary place in your life, no corner tucked away, however covered that he doesn't know about. All things are open and naked before the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

My friend, there is no mask that hides from God, so don't try to wear one. Now what I want you to notice is this, that Jesus assumed that kind of knowledge. And the New Testament apostles, the New Testament writers affirm unequivocally that he had perfect knowledge of man.

I have no time to pursue this as it deserves to be pursued, but I want to say two things. I want to remind you of that statement in John chapter 2 verses 24 and 25. Jesus has come to Jerusalem and many people profess to be believers in him at that stage.

And we read this, but Jesus would not entrust himself to them for he knew all men. He did not need man's testimony about man for he knew what was in man. They kind of trusted in him, but he did not trust himself to them.

Why? Because he didn't want to, because he didn't want to have fellowship with men, not at all, but because he knew the hearts of men. They were not ready for it. They didn't really believe in him.

They made a profession which was not genuine. And so Jesus did not did not open his heart to them. He couldn't do it.

Now later on in his ministry we read in John chapter 16 and verse 30 how the disciples affirm concerning him, now we see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. They discovered that he knew everything about man and he knew everything that was necessary to know to be the perfect teacher of his disciples. And so that passage goes on to say this makes us believe that you came from God.

Jesus knew those whom he was teaching and that is a prerequisite of of effectual knowledge, effectual teaching. Jesus knew the scriptures. Now this again is a subject all its own and the only thing that I can do this morning is this.

It's just to remind you of the fact and point to this text. Jesus knew the prophet Zechariah. Do you know him? Jesus knew that in chapter 13 of Zechariah and verse 7 something was said concerning himself as the shepherd and concerning his disciples as the sheep.

Do you know what is said about you in the Old Testament? Do you know the promises? Do you know the predictions? Do you know the threats? The blessed son of God learned the scriptures, studied the scriptures. He knew the scriptures and he would teach according to the scriptures. For he said he had come not to do away with the law and the prophets but that they should be fulfilled in him and through him.

And so just as in the case of the encounter with satan in the wilderness at the beginning of his ministry, he showed that he was a master of scripture. He knew when satan was misquoting. He knew when satan was elucidating principles which were not based upon scripture.

They were a perversion of scripture. And he knew how he himself could cast back his mind and his memory and draw out scriptures to counter what satan put before him. And he did it three times and rebutted and fought the devil away with the word of the Lord.

It is written. It is written. You see and here is knowledge of scripture comes to the fore so that he is able at the right time to tell the Now look something big's about to happen.

Beware, be ready. But then I must move forward. Jesus knew that the moment of the fulfillment of that scripture in Zechariah as it related to his own experience and that of the disciples had actually arrived.

Here is the prophet with the insight you see into the movement of history, into the things that were happening, the understanding of the times and of what what God was doing. You will all fall away, Jesus told them, because it is written. Jesus knew that the hour had arrived when the shepherd was to be stricken by God.

Now if you compare Zechariah 13 and verse 7 with that same passage as quoted by Jesus here, you will see that there is a difference. He didn't quote it exactly as you find it in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament you will find these words.

Awake, O sword against my shepherd, against the man who is close to me. Strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered. As Jesus quoted it, he said, I will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered.

Now there's a difference there. You don't find that pronoun I in the prophet. What's the point? Why are we calling attention to this? Who is this I to whom Jesus refers? Who is the I who is going to strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered? Well, what I want you to see is this, of course, that I refers to God in the first place.

You go back to Zechariah and you will see that Jesus was really expounding the prophet even though he is adding the pronoun, pronoun I. Because in the whole of that context it is God who is doing things. God is the main actor. And even though in verse 7 in chapter 13 there is no pronoun that refers to God, God is essentially the actor.

And so Jesus brings it in and he says, I will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered. The I then is God striking Jesus, leading to the running away of the sheep. Now here we envisage something that we need to see in these passion narratives.

We will, of course, see what man is doing to Jesus. We've already started that. We've seen Judas betraying him for 30 pieces of silver.

We are about to see Peter denying him. We shall then see the whole company of disciples running away and leaving him to himself. And then we shall see him before the Caiaphas, the high priest and the other high priests joining him in the high priestly palace.

We shall see him going to Pilate and to Herod. And we shall see him buffeted around and we shall see him ill-treated and manhandled and ultimately nailed to the cross by human, human, human hands. And all of them were guilty and all of them are answerable for the evil of their deeds, Jews and Gentiles, high and low, rich and poor.

But I want you to see that Calvary was not something simply contrived by human hate. That which is going to happen tonight in the grove of Gethsemane and tomorrow on Calvary is something that God is doing. And if you and I miss this dimension, then we'll never see the real significance of the cross of Jesus Christ.

God had planned it. God had purposed it. God had sent forth His Son.

Now again, you see, this is a large theme that I can only refer to. Do you remember some of the passages from the Old Testament that make this clear? Take, for example, purely illustrative, take that word from Isaiah the prophet. All we like sheep have gone astray.

Each one of us has turned to his own way. And then you remember the next statement. And the Lord, let me put it, and Jehovah has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Says one passage of scripture prophetically and messianically looking forward, thy billows and thy waves are gone over me, the billows of God. Says the apostle Paul in a passage in Romans chapter three, God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, or as the King James Version puts it, God set him forth on that cross of Calvary as a sacrifice. Now get that, my friends.

Oh, Pilate was responsible and Judas was responsible and the Jews were responsible and others were responsible and they will have to answer at the great day of judgment for the measure of their accountability. And yet behind it, there was this plan of God that his son should be the bearer of way of the sins of men. He devised the plan whereby he would bring home again his banished ones through sending his co-equal son to bear away the sins of men.

He planned it. It's in the light of this and one of the loveliest of hymns always comes back to me. Do you know these words? I have not found in our hymnory and I haven't found it in any of the hymnories over here in Canada, actually.

Awake my soul and rise amazed and yonder see how hangs the mighty Savior God upon a cursed tree. How gloriously fulfilled is that most ancient plan contrived in the eternal mind before the world began. God planned it and the purpose of God is being fulfilled.

Judas and the others concerned would have been able to do nothing at all were it not for the fact that God's plan of salvation is being fulfilled. Jesus not only knew that the hour had arrived when the shepherd was to be stricken by God and afflicted, Jesus knew that it was to take place that night. Matthew puts it like this, Jesus told them this very night you will fall away.

Mark puts it more generally. It is imminent in Mark's gospel too, of course, the one we are considering, but Matthew puts in these words this very night. Jesus knew, you see, Jesus knew that as the shades of that very night had fallen upon them as they moved out onto Olivet, they were about to witness the fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy that God would strike himself and smite him for the sins of others, the sins that he bore as our sin bearer.

And when that great striking, that smiting of God would take place, the sheep would scatter like a crowd of frightened animals. Moreover, Jesus knew that the smiting of the shepherd would be accompanied by the scattering of the sheep. Let's notice that his knowledge is the knowledge of the prophet, and that brings me to something else.

Jesus assuming the role of the king. I can only refer to this. It is something that will come out again before we have finished with these studies in Mark, but I want you to see it here.

It's very necessary to see it here. Our Lord had full knowledge of all that was about to take place, as is evident from these prophecies, from what we've said already, but I want you to see his courage. I want

you to see his self-mastery.

I want you to see his lack of concern for his own comforts and his sole concern to do the Father's will and to finish what God had given him to do. And he does not cringe, and he asks for nothing save grace to finish the work that the Father gave him to do until he comes to that point on the cross when he cries, it is finished. The king.

It comes out here, of course, in that particular reference when Jesus says in verse 28, after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee. Now, it's only a fool or one who knows himself to be the king that would utter such words. You don't do things like that.

I was speaking to a gentleman this week who's only got a few weeks to live, and we were trying to arrange when we should meet again, and not knowing whether they were going to be two weeks or three weeks, maybe four, we were wondering when we could meet because he had to go out of the city for a day or two. You know, that good man didn't say to me, well, I'll meet you a couple of days after my resurrection. Now, please don't think I'm playing with holy things, I'm not.

But he wouldn't talk to me like that. You don't make plans, you don't make arrangements, you don't put in a date and an appointment in your diary for a couple of days after you're risen from the dead and say, I'll meet you, I'll meet you, since so and so. You're a fool if you do, or you are the Son of God, sovereign, Lord of time, Lord of death, and you know that the grave doesn't stand in your way.

Men and women, that's the one we have here. He's the Lord of life and he's the Lord of death, and he was conscious of that lordship from the word go. He knows he is born to be king.

In the language of Peter on the day of Pentecost, when he was risen from the dead, God made him a prince and a savior. He had that consciousness already, and because of it, he has peace. Imagine him, imagine him singing that hallow on that Passover.

Now, I can't go into this this morning. I ask you to read those Psalms when you go home, and you see to what they refer, particularly Psalm 118. It doesn't all come out in the passage we read earlier on today of how he will have said, bind, bind the sacrifice to the horns of the altar and so forth, offering himself to be the sacrifice afresh and to do anything that is to the praise of Jehovah, and he sang it.

He went singing to the cross, and he tells them, after I'm risen from the dead, I'll go ahead of you to Galilee. Galilee, where I called you. Galilee, where your families are.

Galilee, where we wrought miracles. Galilee, where we taught the multitudes. Galilee, old sweet Galilee.

I'm going back to Galilee. Meet me there. Oh, my friend, you need to see the king, and the Christ I ask you to trust is a king of kings and a king of death, and if he's not, he's not trustworthy.

Let me hasten hurriedly to the other matter. Here also we have a picture of him as the priest. Now, you may ask me where this is.

You can't see it. Well, neither can I in Mark, but this is what makes it necessary to bring together the testimony of all the gospels and let them say the one big thing they all want to say, and we'll see that some of them say some things that the others don't, and when you put the picture together, it makes an amazing tapestry of truth. Now, you notice Peter's reaction here to Jesus' announcement.

I don't think I need to refer to the details in verses 29 and 30 again. How Peter insisted that he wouldn't deny his Lord. He wouldn't run away.

He wouldn't be scattered. He's got the energy. He's got the will, and even though all the others go, you can trust me, says Peter.

Poor Peter didn't know himself, you see. And then when Jesus says to him, look Peter, you're going to deny me three times tonight before the rooster crows twice. Not on your life, he says.

Not on your life. Not me. Even if it comes to the point that I have to die for you, I'm going to be faithful and you can count on me.

See, he didn't know himself. He was quite sincere. You couldn't doubt the man's sincerity.

He meant it, but he didn't know his own weaknesses. Neither did he know the power of Satan. Now, how then, how then is it possible for Peter to be saved from utter ruin? And how is it possible for these scattered people, these scattered disciples to be brought together again into one cohesive army that is going to go out according to the book of the acts of the apostles and turn the world upside down? What's going to do it? Men and women, I want you to see the picture.

I can only give you the little snippet this morning, but you see there are two passages that must fit in here into the picture. And they represent Jesus's priestly ministry, His high priestly ministry. First of all, the high priestly prayer of John 17 was actually offered at this particular point in time.

I was often puzzled as to where exactly John 17 fitted in. Now, it is clear to me that this is exactly where it fits in. They've gone, they've, they've gone out from the room where they were, the upper room where they had the supper and the Passover feast.

They've gone out and it is probably on the way. They stayed somewhere en route toward the grove of Gethsemane. And Jesus prayed that great prayer of John 17.

Now, the burden of that prayer was this. First of all, Jesus began to pray for Himself. Then He began to pray for the disciples then present.

And then, remember, He began to pray for all successive ages of disciples right down to the end of the age. He prayed for you on the way to Gethsemane. He prayed for me on the way to Gethsemane.

He thought of you on the way to the cross. He thought of me on the way to the cross. He prayed for us all on the very route to Calvary.

Three things He prayed for in that prayer. There are three things He prayed for. The shepherd is going to be smitten and the sheep are going to be scattered.

And it looks as if the bottom's knocked out of everything. Listen to Jesus pray. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world, but that you protect them from the evil one.

Verse 15 in John 17. I'm not asking, says Jesus, that you take them out of this cauldron that is about to boil over. No, no, no, no.

I'm not asking that. But what I am asking you, Father, is that when I am going in my humanity to die upon the cross, you'll watch over them and you'll keep them safe. Their safety.

If you ask me how the disciples were brought back to faith again and obedience again and could be commissioned, I tell you, they were brought back because Jesus prayed for them. They were made safe because Jesus prayed for them. And the man that is encompassed in the prayers of Jesus is a man or a woman who is in safety.

Whether he knows it or not, he is in safety. Then he prayed in John 17, 17 for their sanctity. Sanctify them, he says, by the truth.

Your word is truth. They're going into the most dreadful experiences imaginable. But you notice Jesus thought of those very experiences as experiences in which character could be made.

You hardly think it would. We are so worldly wise, you see. We don't think like that.

But the sheep are going to be scattered and they're all going to be frightened, terrified. Jesus saw that as the very climate in which they might be sanctified, made holy. And you know, sometimes you and I have to pass through storms before we can be deeply sanctified.

Much of our holiness is skin deep until we get into trouble. We're far too well and we're far too happy and we're far too rich. Not when the bottom of the bucket falls out.

We're in a place where grace can be ministered unto us and God become real to us. Sanctify them in your truth. Your word is truth.

And the third plea in John 17 was for their unity. Now this is tremendous. Verses 20 and 21.

My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message that all of them may be one. All of them may be one.

Father, just as you were in me and I in you, may they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. Now just notice this one thread, that they may be one. He's envisaging they're being scattered abroad.

Every man to his own place. Mark uses those very words, to his own place or to his own things. Whether it refers to his... I'm sorry, Matthew uses that.

Whether it's to his own relations or his own home or his own business. Everyone going to his own place as Peter went to the boats. I don't know.

But everyone's to be scattered. Disunited. Disintegrated.

There'll be nothing cohesive about them. Nothing that marks them out as one people of God. But Jesus prayed.

Hallelujah. Jesus prayed. And one of the fruits of Jesus' prayer is this, the wandering, straying, wayward sheep, each one going his own way, saying his own thing, doing his own deed.

When Jesus prays, comes back again. And by the time we come to Acts chapter 2, Peter stood with the 11 in the unity of the faith and of the Spirit of God. Hallelujah.

Ours is a wonderful Savior. So much with regards to the general disciples, but now what about Peter? There's another passage you need to read right in this context, and then I'm finished. Sorry, visitors, you're not used to such a lengthy dissertation as this.

Well, you'll forgive us, won't you? And pray for those who come regularly, despite it all. Now, the revelation of Satan's special plan for Peter in particular, and of Jesus matching such satanic plans with his own intercession for Peter, were also spoken at this time. Luke 22, 31, 32.

Simon, Simon, said Jesus, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brethren.

Now, have you got that? The devil had a special eye on Peter. He wanted to do something to Peter particularly. He wanted to make Peter an impossible man as a disciple.

He was so impetuous, so arrogant. He wanted to go his own way, and the devil had a special plan for him. He had special gifts of leadership, too.

All right, says the Lord Jesus, I'll deal with Satan, too, as far as you are concerned, Peter. Peter, he says, I've prayed for you, that your faith should not fail. And notice how he goes on to say, and if you turn round again.

He didn't say that. There was no if there, any more than was there an if with reference to his own resurrection. It's not if I rise again, I will go before you into Galilee.

It's when I rise again. There is no if. Peter's faith will be saved when you are converted, when you have been turned around from the way you were running, when you've been turned right around again and you've come back into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Savior.

Make use of the experience that has been yours to make your brothers and sisters strong. Your experience will be made such, says the Lord to him, that you can be of help to those who have gone through like circumstances or at least have been tempted to. I hope you'll forgive me for fitting in the simple narrative that we have here today into this particular background, because I think we need to see it.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, we need to see our Lord more clearly than we ever have, to worship Him, to adore Him, to sing His praises, to pray to the Father through Him, to represent Him in a world, to be proud of Him in our evangelism, to be daring for Him in suffering. We need to see Him. That's the reason why I've done this this morning.

Don't you dare read these narratives and think of Him as poor Jesus, buffeted by every wind, and He can do nothing at all about it. True, He was buffeted far more so than we can ever imagine. But He said, No man taketh my life from me.

I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. May the Lord therefore bless these words to His glory and to our prophet, to His holy name. Let us pray.

O Lord, our Father, we bless Your holy name, that we are privileged to have Your word in our hands, for the light that emerges from it, for the guidance it is to us, and for the food, the energy it imparts to our souls. Many of us bowed before You this morning are very much like those disciples. Much lesser trials put us in danger of scattering, running away from one another, leaving one another in the darkness of sin,

alone to the wolves.

Lesser evils than they felt and they experienced cause us to lose faith and lose heart. We thank You this morning that we have a great high priest who is passed into the heavens, even Jesus the Son of God. And because He ever lives to make intercession for us, He is able to save to the uttermost those that keep on coming to God through Him.

Bless each one of us according to our needs, that being blessed we may be the agents and channels of blessing to a needy, bewildered world. And we ask it in Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. Amen.

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