

Lenten Studies

2026



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Lenten Studies 2026

Lent is a 40-day period of fasting, prayer, and charity leading up to Easter. It's a time of preparation and penitence for Christians. According to the canonical gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, Jesus spent forty days fasting in the desert before the beginning of his public ministry, during which he endured temptation by Satan. Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of this forty-day liturgical period of prayer and fasting leading up to Lent.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday and ends with Easter Sunday. Lent is a season traditionally has been in the Church a time for "recalling or preparing for baptism" and for penance, which "disposes the faithful, who more diligently hear the word of God and devote themselves to prayer, to celebrate the paschal mystery".

These studies focus on the Gospel readings set out in the Revised Common Lectionary – Year A

These studies are developed to assist us in our faith and discipleship and help us grow in our understanding of the mission of God.

The text of Bible passages shared uses the New International Version UK Edition. Another recommended version is the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSVUE) **Each person is encouraged to read the passages in different translations.** This is often easy to do on an electronic device which has access to the internet.

The following are useful sites to draw on as a resource



<https://www.biblegateway.com/>



<https://biblehub.com/interlinear/>

Study versions of Bible translations can also be helpful

Study 1 – Trials and Testing

Focus Reading: Matthew 4:1-11

Other Readings:

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

Psalm 32

Romans 5:12-19

Matthew 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted^[a] by the devil. ² After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”

⁴ Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’^[b]”

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ⁶ “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written:

“He will command his angels concerning you,
and they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’^[c]”

⁷ Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’^[d]”

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. ⁹ “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”

¹⁰ Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’^[e]”

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Footnotes

- a. [Matthew 4:1](#) The Greek for *tempted* can also mean *tested*.
- b. [Matthew 4:4](#) Deut. 8:3
- c. [Matthew 4:6](#) Psalm 91:11,12
- d. [Matthew 4:7](#) Deut. 6:16
- e. [Matthew 4:10](#) Deut. 6:13

Study 1 Questions

1. What would you like clarification or more information about in relation to this passage?
2. What stands out for you in or about this passage?
3. What have you learnt or been taught about this passage previously?
4. What story, occurrence or teaching does this passage follow-on from?
5. What story, occurrence or teaching follows this passage?
6. Why might the forty days and nights be important to understanding the temptations/tests that Jesus faced?
7. Why were the three tests/temptations very powerful and applicable to Jesus?
8. What is this passage is about? What is your interpretation of its meaning?
9. What do you think that it is intended to teach us? What should we take away from reading this in terms of its application to our faith and discipleship?
10. What temptations might we face as individuals that might be on a par to those faced by Jesus?
11. What temptations might we face as the Church that might be on a par to those faced by Jesus?

Study 2 – Born Again

Focus Reading: John 3:1-17

Other Readings:

Genesis 12:1-4a

Psalm 121

Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

John 3:1-17

Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. ² He came to Jesus at night and said, ‘Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.’

³ Jesus replied, ‘Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.^[a]’

⁴ ‘How can someone be born when they are old?’ Nicodemus asked. ‘Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!’

⁵ Jesus answered, ‘Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit^[b] gives birth to spirit. ⁷ You should not be surprised at my saying, “You^[c] must be born again.” ⁸ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.’^[d]

⁹ ‘How can this be?’ Nicodemus asked.

¹⁰ ‘You are Israel’s teacher,’ said Jesus, ‘and do you not understand these things? ¹¹ Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. ¹² I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven – the Son of Man.^[e] ¹⁴ Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness,

so the Son of Man must be lifted up,^[1] ¹⁵ that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.^{'[9]}

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

Footnotes

- a. John 3:3 The Greek for *again* also means *from above*; also in verse 7.
- b. John 3:6 Or *but spirit*
- c. John 3:7 The Greek is plural.
- d. John 3:8 The Greek for *Spirit* is the same as that for *wind*.
- e. John 3:13 Some manuscripts *Man, who is in heaven*
- f. John 3:14 The Greek for *lifted up* also means *exalted*.
- g. John 3:15 Some interpreters end the quotation with verse 21.

Study 2 Questions

1. What would you like clarification or more information about in relation to this passage?
2. What stands out for you in or about this passage?
3. What have you learnt or been taught about this passage previously?
4. What story, occurrence or teaching does this passage follow-on from?
5. What story, occurrence or teaching follows this passage?
6. What might being born again be about?
7. What might the lifting up of the snake refer to? Look up Numbers 21:8-9 and do an Internet search about it.
8. What does it mean to believe in Jesus – the Son?

Study 3 – Worshipping in Spirit and in Truth

Focus Reading: John 4:5-42

Other Readings:

Exodus 17:1-7

Psalm 95

Romans 5:1-11

John 4:5-42

So, he [Jesus] came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

⁷ When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, 'Will you give me a drink?' ⁸ (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, 'You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?' (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.^[a])

¹⁰ Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.'

¹¹ 'Sir,' the woman said, 'you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?' ¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?'

¹³ Jesus answered, 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.'

¹⁵ The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.'

¹⁶ He told her, 'Go, call your husband and come back.'

¹⁷ 'I have no husband,' she replied.

Jesus said to her, 'You are right when you say you have no husband. ¹⁸ The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.'

¹⁹ 'Sir,' the woman said, 'I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.'

²¹ 'Woman,' Jesus replied, 'believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.'

²⁵ The woman said, 'I know that Messiah' (called Christ) 'is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.'

²⁶ Then Jesus declared, 'I, the one speaking to you – I am he.'

²⁷ Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, 'What do you want?' or 'Why are you talking with her?'

²⁸ Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, ²⁹ 'Come, see a man who told me everything I've ever done. Could this be the Messiah?' ³⁰ They came out of the town and made their way towards him.

³¹ Meanwhile his disciples urged him, 'Rabbi, eat something.'

³² But he said to them, 'I have food to eat that you know nothing about.'

³³ Then his disciples said to each other, 'Could someone have brought him food?'

³⁴ 'My food,' said Jesus, 'is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. ³⁵ Don't you have a saying, "It's still four months until harvest"? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the

fields! They are ripe for harvest. ³⁶ Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. ³⁷ Thus the saying “One sows and another reaps” is true. ³⁸ I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labour.’

³⁹ Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, ‘He told me everything I’ve ever done.’ ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. ⁴¹ And because of his words many more became believers.

⁴² They said to the woman, ‘We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Saviour of the world.’

Footnotes

- a. John 4:9 Or do not use dishes Samaritans have used

Study 3 Questions

1. What would you like clarification or more information about in relation to this passage?
2. What stands out for you in or about this passage?
3. What have you learnt or been taught about this passage previously?
4. What story, occurrence or teaching does this passage follow-on from?
5. What story, occurrence or teaching follows this passage?
6. What is this passage is about? What is your interpretation of its meaning?

7. Why is it significant that Jesus is talking with a Samaritan woman?

Jews in the first century generally held deep, long-standing animosity toward Samaritans, regarding them as ritually unclean, "half-breed" apostates, and spiritual enemies. This hatred stemmed from centuries of religious, historical, and territorial conflict, including the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim and their rejection of Jerusalem's authority.

8. Jesus affirms that he is the Messiah/Christ. How common in the Gospels is it for Jesus to do this? How significant is it that he reveals this to this Samaritan woman?

9. What do you think "living water" is?

10. What might Jesus mean by saying, "is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks"? How might it apply to us as the Church today?

11. What do you think the part of the passage about food, sowing and harvesting means? How might it apply to us as the Church today?

Study 4 – Spiritual Blindness

Focus Reading: John 9:1-41

Other Readings:

1 Samuel 16:1-13

Psalm 23

Ephesians 5:8-14

John 9:1-41

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. ² His disciples asked him, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’

³ ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned,’ said Jesus, ‘but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. ⁴ As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.’

⁶ After saying this, he spat on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes. ⁷ ‘Go,’ he told him, ‘wash in the Pool of Siloam’ (this word means ‘Sent’). So the man went and washed and came home seeing.

⁸ His neighbours and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, ‘Isn’t this the same man who used to sit and beg?’ ⁹ Some claimed that he was.

Others said, ‘No, he only looks like him.’

But he himself insisted, ‘I am the man.’

¹⁰ ‘How then were your eyes opened?’ they asked.

¹¹ He replied, ‘The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.’

¹² ‘Where is this man?’ they asked him.

‘I don’t know,’ he said.

¹³ They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. ¹⁴ Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and

opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. ¹⁵ Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. 'He put mud on my eyes,' the man replied, 'and I washed, and now I see.'

¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, 'This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.'

But others asked, 'How can a sinner perform such signs?' So they were divided.

¹⁷ Then they turned again to the blind man, 'What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened.'

The man replied, 'He is a prophet.'

¹⁸ They still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. ¹⁹ 'Is this your son?' they asked. 'Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?'

²⁰ 'We know he is our son,' the parents answered, 'and we know he was born blind. ²¹ But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself.' ²² His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who already had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. ²³ That was why his parents said, 'He is of age; ask him.'

²⁴ A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. 'Give glory to God by telling the truth,' they said. 'We know this man is a sinner.'

²⁵ He replied, 'Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!'

²⁶ Then they asked him, 'What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?'

²⁷ He answered, 'I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?'

²⁸ Then they hurled insults at him and said, 'You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples of Moses! ²⁹ We know that God spoke

to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from.'

³⁰ The man answered, 'Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. ³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will. ³² Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.'

³⁴ To this they replied, 'You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!' And they threw him out.

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?'

³⁶ 'Who is he, sir?' the man asked. 'Tell me so that I may believe in him.'

³⁷ Jesus said, 'You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.'

³⁸ Then the man said, 'Lord, I believe,' and he worshipped him.

³⁹ Jesus said,^[a] 'For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.'

⁴⁰ Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, 'What? Are we blind too?'

⁴¹ Jesus said, 'If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.'

Footnotes

- a. [John 9:39](#) Some early manuscripts do not have *Then the man said . . .* ³⁹ *Jesus said.*

Study 4 Questions

1. What would you like clarification or more information about in relation to this passage?
2. What stands out for you in or about this passage?
3. What have you learnt or been taught about this passage previously?
4. What story, occurrence or teaching does this passage follow-on from?
5. What story, occurrence or teaching follows this passage?
6. What is the significance of mud in this story? Jesus can just heal people, why is spitty mud needed?
7. Twice sin is mentioned and it is linked with a person's birth. In what way might sin be at play at our birth?
8. What are all the ways that people in the story might be described as being blind? How does this help us understand, or see, the meaning of this story?
9. In Verse 39 Jesus states, "Jesus said, 'For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.'" Compare this to John 3: 17-21. How might these passages help us understand 'spiritual blindness'?
10. What do you think that this passage is intended to teach us? What should we take away from reading this in terms of its application to our faith and discipleship?

Study 5 – “I Am the Resurrection”

Focus Reading: John 11:1-45

Other Readings:

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Psalm 130

Romans 8:6-11

John 11:1-45

Now a man named Lazarus was ill. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ² (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay ill, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) ³ So the sisters sent word to Jesus, ‘Lord, the one you love is ill.’

⁴ When he heard this, Jesus said, ‘This illness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.’ ⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶ So when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed where he was two more days, ⁷ and then he said to his disciples, ‘Let us go back to Judea.’

⁸ ‘But Rabbi,’ they said, ‘a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?’

⁹ Jesus answered, ‘Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the day-time will not stumble, for they see by this world’s light. ¹⁰ It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light.’

¹¹ After he had said this, he went on to tell them, ‘Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.’

¹² His disciples replied, ‘Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.’ ¹³ Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.

¹⁴ So then he told them plainly, ‘Lazarus is dead, ¹⁵ and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.’

¹⁶ Then Thomas (also known as Didymus^[a]) said to the rest of the disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.'

⁷ On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was less than two miles^[b] from Jerusalem, ¹⁹ and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. ²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

²¹ 'Lord,' Martha said to Jesus, 'if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.'

²³ Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.'

²⁴ Martha answered, 'I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.'

²⁵ Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; ²⁶ and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?'

²⁷ 'Yes, Lord,' she replied, 'I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.'

²⁸ After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. 'The Teacher is here,' she said, 'and is asking for you.' ²⁹ When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet entered the village but was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹ When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.

³² When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.'

³³ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. ³⁴ 'Where have you laid him?' he asked.

'Come and see, Lord,' they replied.

³⁵ Jesus wept.

³⁶ Then the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!'

³⁷ But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?'

³⁸ Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. ³⁹ 'Take away the stone,' he said.

'But, Lord,' said Martha, the sister of the dead man, 'by this time there is a bad odour, for he has been there four days.'

⁴⁰ Then Jesus said, 'Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?'

⁴¹ So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, 'Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.'

⁴³ When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth round his face.

Jesus said to them, 'Take off the grave clothes and let him go.'

⁴⁵ Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

Footnotes

- a. [John 11:16](#) *Thomas* (Aramaic) and *Didymus* (Greek) both mean *twin*.
- b. [John 11:18](#) Or about 3 kilometres

Study 5 Questions

1. What would you like clarification or more information about in relation to this passage?
2. What stands out for you in or about this passage?
3. What have you learnt or been taught about this passage previously?
4. What story, occurrence or teaching does this passage follow-on from?
5. What story, occurrence or teaching follows this passage?
6. Do an Internet search about the meaning of 'resurrection.' How does this help us in understanding this story about the rising of Lazarus?
7. In verses 5 & 6 Jesus is said to love Martha and Mary, but yet, when he learned that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was. Why might Jesus have not gone straight away? Why might this be important?
8. Why do you think Jesus wept in Verse 35? What do you think this means?
9. When Jesus speaks about being 'the resurrection and the life'
10. What might it mean to believe in Jesus and still live even though we might die? How do might we understand the significance of Lazarus living even though he died help us to understand resurrection?

Study 6 – Hosanna

Focus Reading: Matthew 21:1-11

Other Readings:

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

Matthew 21:1-11

As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ² saying to them, ‘Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. ³ If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.’

⁴ This took place to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet:

⁵ ‘Say to Daughter Zion,

“See, your king comes to you,
gentle and riding on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”^[a]

⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. ⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. ⁸ A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

‘Hosanna^[b] to the Son of David!’

‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’^[c]

‘Hosanna^[d] in the highest heaven!’

¹⁰ When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, ‘Who is this?’

¹¹ The crowds answered, ‘This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.’

Footnotes

- a. [Matthew 21:5](#) Zech. 9:9
- b. [Matthew 21:9](#) A Hebrew expression meaning 'Save!' which became an exclamation of praise; also in verse 15
- c. [Matthew 21:9](#) Psalm 118:25,26
- d. [Matthew 21:9](#) A Hebrew expression meaning 'Save!' which became an exclamation of praise; also in verse 15

Study 5 Questions

1. What would you like clarification or more information about in relation to this passage?
2. What stands out for you in or about this passage?
3. What have you learnt or been taught about this passage previously?
4. What story, occurrence or teaching does this passage follow-on from?
5. What story, occurrence or teaching follows this passage?
6. What is the significance of Jesus riding a donkey into Jerusalem? Do an Internet search.
7. Hosanna means 'save.' How might save have become a cry of praise?
8. What might the people be wanting to be saved from? Do an Internet search to help.
9. What might it mean for us to praise God and call for Jesus to save us?



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