Luke 10:1-16 Aug 4, 2019

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Why do you think that there are so few willing to labor for souls that are destined to be separated from God for eternity? [Let people engage – See last week's lesson and all of the "excuses" given!]

<u>Transition:</u> Luke records Jesus's commissioning of more disciples to go ahead of Him to spread the good news. I invite us to pay attention to His instructions, and then pay attention to what happens to those who reject His message. Let's begin.

BOOK:

Jesus Sends Out the Seventy-two

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. ² He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. ³ Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. ⁴ Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

⁵ "When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' ⁶ If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. ⁷ Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

⁸ "When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. ⁹ Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you.' ¹⁰ But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, ¹¹ 'Even the dust of your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God is near.' ¹² I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

¹³ "Woe to you, Korazin (an ancient village in northern Galilee)! Woe to you, Bethsaida (the hometown of Peter, Andrew, and Philip, a fishing village)! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. ¹⁴ But it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. ¹⁵ And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths (Hades).

¹⁶ "He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me."

Process Observations/Questions:

Q: What did you most like about this passage? What resonated with you? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you least like about this passage? What did you read in this text that makes you uncomfortable? [Let people engage]

When I think about the Lord's words in verse 2, I had to ask mself, "Do I pray for the harvest? Did I pray for the harvest this past week? Do I regularly pray for the Lord's work around the world?....Do I ask Him to raise up and send out workers into His harvest?"

If you're like me: I pray for the things that matter the most to me. I pray daily for my family and close friends, because they matter greatly to me. If I get sick, I pray for my health, because that matters to me. Whatever the needs are, I pray earnestly for those needs, because needs matter to me. But the important question is, "Does the Lord's harvest matter enough to me to motivate me to pray often for it?"

Q: What did you find in this passage that you didn't understand? [Let people engage]

70 Or 72? "Luke 10 is the only place where we find the account of Jesus sending a specific 70 (or 72) disciples to prepare the way before Him. The round number **seventy** may have had general reference either to the seventy elders, or to the seventy members of the Great Sanhedrim; or it may have had special reference to the opinion prevalent among the Jewish theologians that there were seventy languages and nations upon the face of the earth."

Q: What do we learn about Jesus in this passage? [Let people engage]

He's very clear about the future judgment. He makes it clear that people will be judged
according to the degree of light that they rejected. There will be degrees of punishment in
hell. It will be worse for those who heard plainly of Christ and rejected it than for those,
such as Sodom, Tyre, and Sidon, that lacked clear witness.

LOOK:

God is the Master Who is sovereign over the work of salvation and yet here we see He gives men a responsibility in His grand plan. The Sovereign Lord must be the One to raise up laborers, which is why we must ask Him. We are not just to go out on our own and get "warm bodies" but pray for "willing hearts" to be raised up!

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). The Bible Exposition Commentary (Vol. 1, pp. 209-210). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Luke 10

The three scenes in Luke 10 illustrate the threefold ministry of every Christian believer, and they answer the question, "What in the world does a Christian do?"

To begin with, we are the Lord's *ambassadors*, sent to represent Him in this world (Luke 10:1–24). We are also *neighbors*, looking for opportunities to show mercy in the name of Christ (Luke 10:25–37). But at the heart of all our ministry is devotion to Christ, so we must be *worshipers* who take time to listen to His Word and commune with Him (Luke 10:38–42).

Whether we are in the harvest field, on the highway, or in the home, our highest privilege and our greatest joy is to do the will of God.

Ambassadors: Representing the Lord (Luke 10:1–16)

This event should not be confused with the sending out of the Twelve (Matt. 10; Luke 9:1–11). There are similarities in the charges given, but this is to be expected since both groups were sent by the same Master to do the same basic job. The 12 Apostles ministered throughout Galilee, but these men were sent into Judea, and the men in this chapter are not called Apostles. They were anonymous disciples.

Why is this event recorded only by Luke, and why did Jesus select seventy men instead of some other number? (Some texts say seventy-two, and the textual evidence is about even.) Just as the Twelve were associated in number with the twelve sons of Jacob and the twelve tribes of Israel, so the Seventy may be associated with the seventy nations listed in Genesis 10. <u>Luke's emphasis is on the universality of the Gospel message</u>, so it seems reasonable that he would be led by the Holy Spirit to include this event. It was a symbolic way of saying, "Jesus wants the message spread to all nations."

Explanation (vv. 1–12). These men were not called "apostles," but they were still "sent [apostello] with a commission" to represent the Lord. They were therefore truly ambassadors of the King. Not only were they sent by Him, but they were also sent before Him to prepare the way for His coming. Their calling was certainly a dignified one.

It was also a difficult calling (Luke 10:2). Harvesting is hard work, even when there are many people helping you, but these men were sent into a vast field with very few workers to help them reap a great harvest. Instead of praying for an easier job, they were to pray for more laborers to join them, and we today need to pray that same prayer. (Please note that it is *laborers*, not spectators, who pray for more laborers! Too many Christians are praying for somebody else to do a job they are unwilling to do themselves.)

Their calling was a dangerous one. As they invaded enemy territory (Luke 10:17), they would be like "lambs among wolves" (Luke 10:3). But as long as they relied on the Lord, they would win the battle. "Any man who takes Jesus Christ seriously becomes the target of the devil," Vance Havner often told audiences. "Most church members do not give Satan enough trouble to arouse his opposition."

It would require discipline and faith for them to do the job (Luke 10:4–8). There was an urgency about the work, and the Lord did not want them to be overburdened with extra supplies

or be delayed on the road by elaborate Eastern greetings. They had to trust God to provide homes and food for them, and they were not to be embarrassed to accept hospitality. After all, they were laboring for the Lord and bringing blessing into the home, and "the laborer is worthy of his hire" (Luke 10:7; see also 1 Cor. 9:14; 1 Tim. 5:18).

They were ambassadors of peace, bringing healing to the sick, deliverance to the possessed, and the Good News of salvation to lost sinners. Like Joshua's army of old, they first proclaimed peace to the cities. If a city rejected the offer of peace, then it chose judgment (Deut. 20:10–18). It is a serious thing to reject the ambassadors God sends.

It is important to note that the special power that Jesus gave to His Apostles (Luke 9:1) and to the Seventy is not ours to claim today. These two preaching missions were very special ministries, and God did not promise to duplicate them in our age. Our Lord's commission to us emphasizes the proclamation of the message, not the performing of miracles (Matt. 28:19–20; Luke 24:46–49).

Denunciation (vv. 13–16). This seems like harsh language from the lips of the Son of God, but we dare not ignore it or try to explain it away. He named three ancient cities that had been judged by God—Sodom (Gen. 19), and Tyre and Sidon (Ezek. 26–28; Isa. 23)—and used them to warn three cities of His day: Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. These three cities had been given more privileges than the three ancient cities, and therefore they had more responsibility. If Sodom, Tyre, and Sidon were destroyed, how could Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum escape?

To hear Christ's ambassadors means to hear Him, and to despise His representatives means to despise Him. "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you" (John 20:21; see also 2 Cor. 5:18–21). The way a nation treats an ambassador is the way it treats the government the ambassador represents. For an interesting illustration of this truth, read 2 Samuel 10.

Martin, J. A. (1985). Isaiah. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 233)

c. Jesus' sending of the messengers to spread the Word (10:1–16)

This section contains instructions similar to those given to the Twelve in 9:1–6. On His way to Jerusalem Jesus was sending out messengers to all the towns in order to give people opportunities to accept His message. Only Luke records this incident.

- (1) The choosing of the 72 (10:1–16). 10:1–12. Jesus gave instructions to the **72**. Some Greek manuscripts in verses 1 and 17 have "70" and others have "72." Both readings have strong support. The 72 were people other than the Twelve, who apparently remained with Jesus on His journey. The 72 were to prepare the way so that when Jesus came into a **town**, it would be ready for Him. When Jesus stated, **Ask the Lord ... to send out workers**, He implied that the ones asking were also to be workers (v. 2). Their mission was dangerous (v. 3) and required haste (v. 4). The 72 were supported by those who accepted their message (v. 7). Through hospitality people would show whether or not they believed the message of the kingdom. To the believing cities the message was to be, **The kingdom of God is near you**. The Messiah was coming, and He could bring in the kingdom. Even the cities that rejected the message were to be told that **the kingdom** was **near**. (For the meaning of wiping **dust** off their **feet**, see comments on 9:5).
- 10:13–16. Jesus warned the surrounding towns against rejecting the 72 because that meant rejecting Jesus and the Father (v. 16). Jesus singled out two cities—**Korazin** and **Bethsaida**, both of which were located in the area of Jesus' early ministry of miracles on the north side of the Sea of Galilee. He also singled out His adopted hometown, **Capernaum**, which also had been a site of

His miraculous works. The message was clear: those cities (no doubt representative of others as well) were to be more severely judged than pagan cities, such as **Tyre and Sidon** (cf. Sodom, v. 12) which did not have the benefit of the Lord's miraculous works and words.

Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). *The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith* (p. 1533). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

10:1 The instructions to the 72 are similar to those to the Twelve (9:3–5), especially in Matthew's version (Mt 10:5–42), prompting many scholars to see a repetition of the mission of the Twelve here. But the purposes of the two missions (besides the number sent) seem sufficiently different to see two different events. It is likely that Jesus gave similar instructions to the groups He sent out and the instructions were here conformed to the same shape. Furthermore, both sets were no doubt summaries of longer discourses by Jesus. Luke 9:51–56 implies that the sending of advance troops was a regular tactic of Jesus.

10:6 Peace, like grace (2:40) and power (8:46), is pictured here as having substantial reality. Jesus referred to a situation in which the Jewish greeting *shalom* was accepted by one disposed to the disciples, allowing them to board at his house. God would honor the blessing offered and give peace to the house. The rejected greeting would not be so honored.

10:10–11 In contrast to the immediate vengeance James and John sought to call down on Samaria (9:51–56), Jesus required a prophetic warning when leaving an inhospitable city.

Stein, R. H. (1992). Luke (Vol. 24, pp. 303-308). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Context

At this point Luke recorded the mission of the seventy(-two), which is similar to the mission of the Twelve told earlier (9:1–6). As in the earlier account he made no specific mention of the location or length of the mission. In his "orderly account" (1:3) Luke was more interested in what Jesus said than in where the disciples went, when they returned, or their personal experiences. The mission charge to the seventy(-two) is closely tied to the preceding passage by "he sent ... ahead of him" (10:1; cf. "resolutely set out" [9:51] and "ahead of him" [9:52]) and references to the kingdom (10:9, 11; cf. the Lukan addition of "proclaim the kingdom of God" in 9:60).

Luke also added various "woes," or judgments, to the account (10:13–15) as well as a concluding summary (10:16). Luke's editorial work shows up most clearly in his arrangement of the material, in the introduction (10:1), in 10:7a, c, and 10:10–11.

The exact relationship of the mission of the seventy(-two) and the mission of the Twelve is greatly debated. For one, the charge to the seventy(-two) is found nowhere else in the Gospels. Second, the similarity between the two mission charges is striking. Third, Matthew's mission of the Twelve includes material found in Luke's mission charge to the seventy(-two). Finally, in 22:35 when Jesus addressed the Twelve, referring to his mission charge to them, he mentioned instructions involving a purse and sandals that do not appear in the charge to the Twelve but only in that to the seventy(-two). Compare 10:4, noting the same order of purse, bag, sandals as in 22:35.

Scholars have debated the origin of this mission narrative. That Jesus sent his disciples on a preaching mission during his ministry, however, is too well attested in the tradition to be denied. Some of the regulations found in 10:10–11, which depend upon Jewish hospitality, seem better suited to a mission in Israel than a post-resurrection mission in Gentile territory. What is certain is that Luke wanted to demonstrate to his readers that the work of missions was not restricted to the Twelve. He used this account to point forward to the church's universal mission after the resurrection.

Comments

10:1 After this. This is a common Lukan expression.

The Lord appointed. For "Lord" see comments on 7:13.

Seventy-two others. This seems to imply that the twelve remained with Jesus and did not take part in this mission. There is a textual problem with respect to the number. "Seventy" is found in \aleph , A, W, f^1 , f^{13} , whereas "seventy-two" is found in \mathfrak{P}^{75} , B, D. Internal evidence favors seventy-two in that the frequency with which seventy appears in Scripture makes it easier to understand why a scribe would want to change seventy-two to seventy. On the other hand, seventy-two appears less frequently. It is difficult to choose between these two readings. Whichever one is chosen, however, the number suggests one for each nation of the world (Gen 10).

Sent them two by two. On a practical level the sending out "two by two" provided mutual support for the disciples, but the theological reason is more important. Two witnesses were needed (Deut 19:15; Num 35:30) in order to bring the condemnation we read of in Luke 10:11–15.

Ahead of him. Literally *before his face*. This literary tie with the preceding materials (9:52–53) is also the exact expression used in 7:27 (cf. Acts 13:24) for John the Baptist's mission. After the death of John the Baptist, the Twelve (Luke 9:52) and the seventy(-two) (10:1) took up the task of preparing the way for the Lord.

Where he was about to go. The seventy(-two) were to go before Jesus and prepare the way. That Luke wanted his readers to think that Jesus was to visit thirty-six separate towns on the way to Jerusalem is unlikely. To do so would have entailed a most circuitous route. It probably is better to understand this as preparing these villages for Jesus' spiritual coming after the resurrection. Luke 10:16 gives support to such an interpretation (cf. Matt 10:40–42).

10:2 The harvest is plentiful. Compare Matt 9:37–38; John 4:35–38. This harvest has been referred to in Luke 8:15. It would have been understood as being much larger by Luke and his readers than by the seventy(-two) who actually went on the mission because Luke and his readers would have understood this as involving a mission to the whole world (cf. 24:47; Acts 1:8). This harvest is not to be confused with the final harvest "on that day" (Luke 10:12–15; cf. Matt 13:24–30, 36–43; Rev 14:15–16) but refers to the present harvest of believers in the "now" time (John 4:35).

Ask the Lord of the harvest. Since the mission involves carrying out God's orders, it is appropriate to pray to him for the tools necessary to accomplish the work.

10:3 I am sending you. The verb ($apostell\bar{o}$) indicates that apostleship in Luke entails mission. Although the Twelve were the apostles par excellence (cf. Luke 9:10; 22:14; Acts 1:26), others like the seventy(-two) can be "sent ones" who proclaim the gospel message. This "apostolic" mission clearly foreshadows Luke 24:46–48; Acts 1:8.

Like lambs among wolves. Compare Matt 10:16; John 10:12.

10:4 Do not take a purse or bag or sandals. Only the command concerning a bag is mentioned at Luke 9:3, but in 22:35 the same three are found in the same order. The "purse" is essentially a money bag as is evident from 12:33. It is uncertain about whether "take" no sandals means that they could wear sandals but not carry an extra pair or whether they could not even wear them. Like the Twelve, the seventy(-two) were to go out in faith.

Do not greet anyone. Compare 2 Kgs 4:29. This is not to be interpreted as a discourtesy, but since Oriental greetings were long and time-consuming, such greetings were best avoided. The urgency of the mission did not permit such lengthy niceties. On the other hand, the greeting found in the next verse was part of the mission.

10:5 Peace to this house. Compare Luke 24:36 (cf. also John 20:19, 21, 26; Judg 6:23; 19:20). This is a typical OT greeting. The more "Christianized" forms are "Grace and peace" and "Grace, mercy and peace." This proclamation of peace, however, serves more as a benediction than a greeting. "House" refers to the household, not to the building.

10:6 A man of peace. That is, a believer (cf. Luke 2:14).

Your peace will rest upon him. This peace is God's peace brought through the mission and ministry of the seventy(-two) as they proclaimed the good news. This "peace" is not a feeling of ease or contentment but an objective reality. It is a synonym for the messianic salvation and its attendant blessings, referred to in 1:79; 2:14; 7:50; 8:48; Acts 10:36. Paul spoke of such peace as being the result of justification (Rom 5:1). Compare the term "sons of the kingdom" in Matt 13:38.

If not, it will return to you. The benediction or prayer of peace will not be effective if faith is not present.

10:7 Stay in that house. Compare 9:4.

Eating and drinking whatever they give you. The issue for the seventy(-two) was not whether the food had been offered to idols (1 Cor 10:25–31) or whether it was clean or unclean (Rom 14:13–23). It involved rather the quality of the food (steak or hamburger), for Samaritans kept the same food laws as Jews. For Luke and his readers, however, this saying might very well have had implications for these other areas. Table fellowship had great symbolic significance in the first century, for such fellowship signified acceptance into God's people (cf. Acts 11:3; Gal 2:12).

For the worker deserves his wages. The parallel in Matt 10:10 reads "keep" or, more literally, *food*. As in Gal 6:6 the messengers of the gospel are entitled to their keep. This involves sustenance, however, not luxury.

Do not move around from house to house. Jesus' messengers merit provisions from believers in return for their ministry, but this injunction warns against manipulation of ministry to gain better housing and food.

10:8 The missionary instruction is now enlarged from the setting of individual homes to that of a town. Matthew 10:11–14 combines the charge concerning the house (Luke 10:5–7) and the town (Luke 10:10–15).

Eat what is set before you. Again the messenger is to be content rather than self-seeking.

10:9 Heal the sick ... and tell them. In 9:2 preaching God's kingdom is placed before healing, but here the order is reversed. Luke may have placed healing first because such healings are to be understood as signs that God's kingdom has come (cf. 11:20). In Matt 10:8 there is a more comprehensive description of the mission.

The kingdom of God is near you. Although elsewhere God's kingdom is said to have arrived (Luke 11:20; 16:16; 17:21), here its nearness is emphasized. This may be due to the fact that Jesus is about to come (see comments on 10:1).

10:10 Go into its streets. These were wide streets. This rejection was to be highly visible and public.

10:11 Even the dust. See comments on 9:5.

Against you. This dative of disadvantage is a shortened form for "as a testimony against you" (cf. 9:5).

Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God is near. Luke underlined this theological truth by referring to it once again (cf. 10:9).

10:12 Sodom. The judgment of Sodom (Gen 19:24–28), which was proverbial (Isa 1:9–10), would be less severe than the judgment that would come upon those cities who reject the missionary preaching of the seventy(-two). The ignorant, even though culpable, would be judged less severely than those who are given the opportunity to hear the gospel and reject it (cf. 12:48).

On that day. In light of Luke 10:14, this designates the final day of judgment (cf. Matt 10:15).

10:13 The woes that follow envision a different audience from the seventy(-two) and illustrate the harsher judgment of Luke 10:12. For "woe" see comments on 6:24.

Korazim. The exact location of this town is uncertain, and this verse is the only indication that Jesus visited it.

Bethsaida! For if the miracles performed in you. The miracle of the feeding of the five thousand was located near Bethsaida (9:10–17).

Tyre and Sidon. These well-known cities represented the pagan world. The point was not that pagan cities would be excused but rather that the cities of Galilee would experience an even greater condemnation.

Sitting in sackcloth and ashes. This was an ancient form of expressing mourning and repentance. Sackcloth was a rough cloth made from goat's hair, and the ashes were either placed on the head (Matt 6:16) or sat on (Job 2:8; Jonah 3:6).

10:15 Capernaum. This was one of the first towns in which Jesus worked a miracle (Luke 4:23; 7:1–10).

Will you be lifted up to the skies? The idea may have been that because Jesus visited Capernaum or performed miracles there (or both) that it expected to be exalted above other cities.

Go down to the depths. Literally go down to Hades. "Hades" is the Greek term used to translate Sheol in the LXX. It can refer to the place of the dead (Ps 89:48), the opposite of heaven (Ps 139:8; Amos 9:2), or the place of the unrighteous dead (1 Enoch 22:3–13; 63:10; 99:11; 2 Esdr 7:36). It is used in the latter sense in Luke 16:22–26 and probably should be understood in the same way here. Whether in Jesus' day there was a clear distinction between "Hades" and hell (Gehenna) is much debated but still uncertain. What is clear is that it designates a place of punishment for the unrighteous. The imagery comes from Isa 14:13, 15.

10:16 He who listens to you. Although not stated, a change of audience from the residents of Korazin and Bethsaida to the seventy(-two) is envisioned. To "listen" or "hear" the disciples means to "receive" them, as the parallel in Matt 10:14 (cf. John 5:24) and the antithetical parallel in Luke 10:16b make clear.

Listens to me. The corporate solidarity of the messenger and the Lord is clear in this verse. See comments on 9:48.

But he who rejects you. To "reject" is the opposite of to "listen."

Rejects him who sent me. This and the previous statement, 10:16b, c, are an example of step parallelism. See comments on 9:48. This saying envisions only two possible responses to the preaching of the seventy(-two). People would either receive/listen or not receive/not listen. No

distinction is made between receiving the messengers (10:8, 10; 9:5) and receiving/hearing the message (10:16).

The Lukan Message

Luke's main emphasis in this passage centers around the church's evangelical mission. Although this theme became more explicit after the resurrection when specific charges were given (24:47–49; Acts 1:8), and although Luke devoted the second part of his work (Acts) to the subject, in this passage he emphasized Jesus' concern for such missions during his own ministry. The mission of the historical Jesus to the Samaritans as presented by Luke became symbolic, foreshadowing the church's later role in worldwide ministry extending far beyond ethnic Israel. This can be seen in part by his omission of the injunction in the Matthean parallel (Matt 10:5), in which Jesus told the disciples not to go to the Gentiles or the Samaritans during their mission. It is true that Matt 10:5f. is a closer parallel to the mission of the Twelve in Luke 9:1–6 than to the present account, but it is significant that Luke omitted this saying from 9:1–6 and 10:1–16. As Ellis observes, "For Luke, the mission of the Seventy is the continuing task of the Church.

The instructions given in this account would also serve, with several important qualifications, as instructions for the church's mission in Luke's day. Luke reinforced the missionary movement of the church in his day by emphasizing its urgency (10:2, 4), the need for commitment (cf. 9:57–62) and endurance in time of persecution (10:3, 6, 10), the means by which the mission was to be sustained (10:4a, 7–8), the message to be proclaimed (10:9, 11), and the eternal significance of the mission (10:5–6, 11–15). He did this by recounting Jesus' own words and ministry, although some modifications would be necessary after the resurrection (22:35–36; 24:49; Acts 1:8).

Another emphasis that must not be ignored is the final judgment. Luke's conviction that such a judgment will take place goes without saying. Luke made clear that the harshness of judgment is based to a great extent upon whether or not one has been given the opportunity to repent. Hearing the good news, if not followed by faith, has terrible implications. The explicit rejection of the gospel carries tragic and inescapable consequences (Luke 10:12, 14).

Luke touched upon other themes as well: the need for prayer for mission workers (10:2; cf. Acts 13:1–3); the repeated admonition not to use the ministry for personal gain (Luke 10:7–8 and 9:4); the arrival of God's kingdom (see Introduction 8 [2]); and the need for repentance (see Introduction 8 [6]).

The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). (Lk 10:1–16). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

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