House to House
Heart to Heart
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VOLUME 21 NUMBER 1

Heart to Heart

During the 1900 years since the Bible was completed, the original books (autographs) have all been lost and will likely never be found.

Thankfully, before they were lost, they were copied. Through the centuries, copies of copies of copies were made. Most of these, too, were eventually lost, but many have been discovered in modern times.

Further, the last book of the Bible was written 1,300 years before the invention of the printing press. In those centuries, several of the world's great libraries—Alexandria, Constantinople, Rome—burned, and hordes of barbarians swept through the lands where copies of Scripture were kept, pillaging and destroying.

Can we, then, still trust today's Bible? How do we know that neither corruption (accidental mistakes) nor collusion (intentional changes) took place? Did transmission destroy inspiration?

Here are four reasons to trust the Bible.

ALMIGHTY GOD SAFEGUARDED THE BIBLE.

Confidence in the Bible is as sure as the character of God. Our assurance is based on:

His pledge. The eternal God promised His Word would "endure forever" (Matthew 24:35; 1 Peter 1:23–25). He never breaks a promise (Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18).

His goodness. God's character is connected to His enduring truth: "The Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations" (Psalm 100:5). If we can trust God's wisdom to provide Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16–17), then we can trust God's omnipotence to safeguard it (Genesis 18:14).

His justice. Since God is just (Revelation 15:3), it follows that once God gave His Word to one generation, it had to remain for all generations. He would not condemn man for not keeping His statutes if no one had them (John 12:48; Acts 10:34–35).

CAREFUL SCRIBES TRANSMITTED THE BIBLE.

Very few Old Testament manuscripts remain (our English translations are primarily based on two). This is because:

- The Old Testament was written from 1400-400 bc, and writing materials (animal skins, papyri) do not normally last that long.

- Invaders looted and destroyed the temple and synagogues where copies were housed. Jerusalem was conquered forty-seven times between 1800 bc and ad 1948.
- Scribes buried worn and flawed manuscripts, as citizens today do tattered flags.
- Scholars believe that scribes destroyed previous manuscripts when they standardized the Old Testament (put in vowels) in the fifth century ad .

New Testament verification relies on comparing thousands of manuscripts; Old Testament verification rests on learning the scribes' methods. For more than 1,500 years, Hebrew prophets received (Hebrews 1:1), and scribes passed down, Scripture from one generation to the next.

Jewish scribes meticulously preserved the law as a matter of conscience. They believed a curse came to those who added to or diminished from God's word (Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:6). Among their rules: an authentic copy must be the exemplar, from which the transcriber ought not deviate in the least; and no word, letter, or even a *yod* (punctuation) could be written from memory. The scribe must always look at the codex before him (Geisler).

Since Jesus endorsed the Jewish Bible in His day (John 5:39), we know it was accurate. Although He accused the Jews of many sins, He never said they had corrupted the sacred scrolls.

The question then becomes: Does our Old Testament match the one in Jesus' day? The modern Old Testament is based on two "Massoretic Texts" (copied by Jewish Massorete scribes in ad 925 and 1009). Massoretes set the standard for exactness. They literally numbered the paragraphs, words, syllables, and letters of every Old Testament book. While other copyists were allowed up to three errors in a book, Massoretes were not. If the middle word and letter of a page did not come out right, they destroyed the copy and made another. These strict requirements, rooted in reverence, created an atmosphere geared to precision.

Still, since our Old Testament is based on a copy more than 1000 years removed from the source, critics doubted its accuracy. That changed in 1947 with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

In March of that year, an Arab shepherd looking for a lost lamb tossed a rock into a hole in a cliff. Hearing something break, he investigated, and what he found—jars with leather scrolls unopened for 1900 years—soon gained the world's attention. More than a half century later, people still talk about it, for in these jars were the oldest surviving texts of the Old Testament.

Between 145 bc and ad 68, a Jewish splinter group inhabited the area. When Romans invaded in ad 68, this group hid their scrolls in caves. In that dry climate, they survived the centuries.

Hundreds of manuscripts were gradually unearthed from eleven caves, eventually providing copies of every Old Testament book except Esther.

The Dead Sea Scrolls allowed scholars to see a copy of the Bible a millennia older than any modern person had ever seen. How accurately did Hebrew scribes pass down Scripture for 1000 years? The modern Old Testament proved to be amazingly accurate. Aside from a few spelling differences and word order variations, it read the same.

PAINSTAKING RESEARCHERS VERIFIED THE BIBLE.

The New Testament was written from about ad 40 to 96. By the end of the first century, all twenty-seven books had been sorted (Luke 1:1–4; 1 Thessalonians 2:13), shared (1 Thessalonians 5:27), circulated (Colossians 4:16), collected (2 Peter 3:15–16), and quoted (1 Timothy 5:18) (Geisler).

While the original documents were God-breathed and without error (2 Timothy 3:16–17; John 17:17), the Bible nowhere says copies would be inspired. As meticulous as church members were at replicating Scripture, minor differences inevitably occurred. Of the thousands of manuscripts, no two were identical until the printing press. At the same time, they were incredibly similar.

Relevant questions to ask in verifying any ancient book include: *Where was it found?* If a Greek manuscript is unearthed in South Dakota, it would raise eyebrows. If in ancient Alexandria, then not so much. *How many copies do we possess?* The more copies to compare, the more likely it is that scholars will spot errors. *How old is it?* Generally speaking, older is better, for it is closer to the source.

Four facts about Bible manuscripts give confidence:

Their diverse location. Manuscripts come from so many places—Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Turkey, Greece, Italy—that collusion is impossible. No one church ever possessed all of them.

Their vast number. Scholars have 5,839 large, 13,000 partial (e.g., Ephesians or part of Matthew) and 60 complete manuscripts.

Their early date. Papyri fragments date to within twenty-five years of the completion of the New Testament. The earliest is John Ryland's (P52) fragment of five verses from John 18. It dates to ad 120. The earliest large manuscript (Bodmer Papyri with Luke, John, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, and Jude) dates to about ad 200. Nearly complete manuscripts—Chester Beaty Papyri (a d 250), Vaticanus Manuscript (ad 325–350), Codex Sinaiticus, and Codex Alexandrinus—are all within 400 years.

Inaccuracies are unlikely to creep in during such a short time period. Sir Frederick Kenyon wrote that the interval between the original composition and the earliest evidence is so small as to be "negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written now has been removed" *(Wikipedia).*

Their consistency. The science of studying variants is "textual criticism." Each variation of a verse is painstakingly compared with others.

Suppose a second grade teacher received a letter from a U.S. president. She asked her students to copy it in their notebooks as she read it aloud. Imagine that later the original letter burned in a house fire. Remembering that the students' notebooks contained copies, she decided to recreate it.

Laying those pages side by side, she discovers that one student misspelled several words, another repeated a word, one misunderstood a phrase, and one never finished it. Yet with twenty-five copies she could accurately reconstruct the original.

This is a simple way to understand textual criticism. If ninety-five percent of copies of a verse read one way, and five percent read differently, for instance, scholars are confident about what is correct.

Textual variations involve only about 1/1000th part of the entire text (Jackson) and mistakes are generally minor, easily spotted, and make no appreciable difference in meaning. The vast majority are misspellings, word order, differences in phraseology, word repetition, and single word omission due to a copyist moving his eyes from one line to the next. Discrepancies are equivalent to spelling differences like S-a-v-i-o-r or S-a-v-i-o-u-r.

Bruce Metzger (1914–2007), a Princeton University scholar of Greek, New Testament, and Old Testament, observed that after 2000 years of copying, only 40 of 20,000 lines in the New Testament are debatable. None affect doctrinal understandings (Anders). Philip Schaff estimated that of 150,000 variations, only 400 affected the sense; and of those only 50 were of significance; and of these not one affected an article of faith. No fundamental doctrine rests on a disputed reading.

ANCIENT CHRISTIANS QUOTED THE BIBLE.

The Bible's friends and enemies frequently quoted Scripture. While the New Testament has only 7,957 verses, early Christians quoted it 36,289 times in sermons, commentaries, debates, books, and letters that still remain. For example, Irenaeus (c. ad 170) quoted it 1800 times, citing 23 of 27 books, omitting only Philemon, James, 2 Peter, and 3 John.

If all 25,000 manuscripts were destroyed, 99.86 percent of the New Testament could be rewritten by citations alone. Sir David Dalrymple wrote that these citations

> . . . roused my curiosity, and as I possessed all the existing works of the Fathers of the second and third centuries, I commenced to search, and up to this time I have found the entire New Testament, except eleven verses (Geisler).

Any one of these four evidences is sufficient to confirm the Bible's authenticity, but put together, the proof is overwhelming. Anyone who argues that today's Bible differs from the original confesses either his ignorance of the history of the Bible and the science of textual criticism or his bias against it.

Bernard Ramm wrote, "A thousand times over the centuries the death knell of the Bible has been sounded, the funeral procession formed, the flowers ordered, the inscription placed on the tomb stone and the eulogy written, but somehow the corpse never stays put" *(Wikipedia).* We can trust the Bible.

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Anders, Max. *The Bible. Embracing God's Truth.* Thomas Nelson, 1995.

Geisler, Norman L. *A General Introduction to the Bible.* 1968.

Jackson, Wayne, citing Gregory, C. R. (1907), *Canon and Text of the New Testament* (New York: Scribners). www.apologeticspress.org/APContent.aspx?category=13&article=5174.

Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. 12 November 15.

Incarnation

An old Latin inscription chiseled in marble summed up Christ's existence:
I AM what I was—God.
I was not what I am—Man.
I am now called both—
GOD and MAN.

"The Word was made fl sh."

JOHN 1:14

God's Plan for Saving Man

God's Grace, Ephesians 2:8
Christ's Blood, Romans 5:9
The Holy Spirit's Gospel, Romans 1:16
Sinner's Faith, Acts 16:31
Sinner's Repentance, Luke 13:3
Sinner's Confession, Romans 10:10
Sinner's Baptism, 1 Peter 3:21
Christian's Work, James 2:24
Christian's Hope, Romans 8:24
Christian's Endurance, Revelation 2:10

Home PAGE

Crosswords and Ink Pens

I found a new young doctor for my 90-year-old mother, whose family physician had died. After examining her, the doctor called us into his office and, ignoring Mother, proceeded to give me the results.

Mother interrupted and said, "Doctor, do you do crossword puzzles?"

"Yes, I do," he replied.

She then asked, "Do you do them with pencil or pen?"

"Why, with a pencil," replied the doctor.

"Well, I do mine with a pen," said Mother. "So you can talk to me."

—Contributed by Jim Bradcmas

"A merry heart doeth good"

PROVERBS 17:22

For more material on the home and family, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, grandparents, and family finances, go to www.housetohouse.com.

Lead Us Not into Marshmallow Temptation

The famous Marshmallow Experiment is very interesting, and the implications are staggering. It seems that a scientist can see the future by watching four-year-olds interact with a marshmallow.

The researcher invites the children, one by one, into a plain room and begins the gentle torment. "You can have this marshmallow right now," he says. "But, if you wait while I run an errand, you can have two marshmallows when I get back."

And then he leaves the room.

Some grab the marshmallow the minute he's out the door. Some last a few minutes before they give in.

Others are determined to wait. They cover their eyes; they put their heads down; they sing to themselves; they try to play games or even fall asleep.

When the researcher returns, he gives these children their two hard-earned marshmallows.

Then, science waits for the children to grow. By the time these children reach high school, something remarkable has happened. A survey of the children's parents and teachers finds that those who as four-year-olds had the fortitude to hold out for the second marshmallow generally grew up to be better adjusted, more popular, adventurous, confident, and dependable teenagers.

The children who gave in to temptation early on were more likely to be lonely, easily frustrated, and stubborn. They buckled under stress and shied away from challenges.

When some of the students in the two groups took the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), the children who had held out longer scored an average of 210 points higher.

The ability to resist temptation—to delay gratification and to control one's urges—is one of life's great success skills. Life calls for vigilance. Temptation is always at hand. But remember, we are never alone.

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suff r you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

1 CORINTHIANS 10:13

Take a Moment to Listen

Take a moment to listen today
To what your children are trying to say;
Listen today, whatever you do
Or they won't be there to listen to you.

Listen to their problems, listen for their needs
Praise their smallest triumphs, praise their smartest deeds;

Tolerate their chatter, amplify their laughter,
Find out what's the matter, find out what they're after.

But tell them that you love them, every single night
And though you scold them, be sure to hold them;
Tell them "Everything's all right; tomorrow's looking bright!"

Take a moment to listen today
To what your children are trying to say.
Listen today, whatever you do
And they will come back to listen to you.

—Denis Waitley

HEBREWS 11
FAITH'S HALL OF FAME

God's pattern of salvation has been the same through the ages. He extends grace to man. Through faith man trusts Him, and through obedience accepts the offer of grace (Romans 1:5; 16:26). Thus Noah was saved by grace, faith, and obedience.

Faith's Hall of Fame shows this consistent pattern.

Abel (11:4): Cain murdered him because he found favor in God's eyes by offering the correct sacrifice **(Genesis 4:1–16).**

Enoch (11:5–6): Walked with God **(Genesis 5:22–24).**

Noah (11:7): Saved his family **(Genesis 6:9–9:17).**

Abraham (11:8–19): Father of the Jewish nation **(Genesis 11:27–25:11).**

Sarah (11:12–13): Mother of the Jewish nation **(Genesis 12–23).**

Isaac (11:20): Passed on God's blessings **(Genesis 21–28).**

Jacob (11:21): Father of the 12 tribes **(Genesis 25–49).**

Joseph (11:22): Predicted the Exodus **(Genesis 30–50).**

Moses 11:23–29): Led the people out of Egypt and gave them the law of God **(Exodus 2–40, death in Deuteronomy 34).**

Joshua (11:30): Leader of God's people **(Exodus 17:9, the Book of Joshua).**

Rahab (11:31): Received the spies **(Joshua 2).**

Gideon (11:32): Judge and leader of God's people **(Judges 6:11–8:23).**

Barak (11:32): Mighty warrior **(Judges 4:6–5:13).**

Samson (11:32): Judge and Nazarite **(Judges 13:24–16:31).**

Jephthah (11:32): Warrior and judge **(Judges 11–12).**

David (11:32): A man after God's own heart **(1 Samuel 16–1 Kings 2:11).**

Samuel (11:32): Prophet and Judge **(1 Samuel 1:20–1 Samuel 25:1).**

Anonymous (11:33–40): Showing this is not an exhaustive list, the chapter references others who served God through faithful obedience.

Daniel (11:33): "Stopped the mouth of lions" **(Daniel 6).**

Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego (11:34): "Quenched the violence of fire" **(Daniel 3).**

Widow of Zarephath (11:35): "Women received their dead raised to life again" recalls the widow whose son was restored to life **(1 Kings 17:17–24).**

Jeremiah, Zechariah (11:35–37): Jeremiah **(Jeremiah 20)**, Zechariah **(2 Chronicles 24:20–21)** and others were tortured or killed for proclaiming God's Word.

Each of these also reminds us of those in the New Testament who suffered and died to bring us salvation: Jesus Christ Himself and His followers such as Stephen and Paul.

Bible QUIZ

VOLUME 21:1

Send us your answers (address on front) to receive a FREE Bible bookmark. We'll grade and return your questions and enclose the bookmark "A Quick Look at the Catholic Church" as a way of saying thanks for spending time in the Word (quantities may be limited).

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Phone: _____

Questions Taken from the King James Version

Answers to Last Issue: *About Those Disciples:* 1. 12 (Luke 6:13); 2. Matthew (Matthew 9:9); 3. Thomas (Didymus) (John 20:24); 4. Wine (I Timothy 5:23); 5. Paul (Acts 14:19–20); 6. Titus (Titus 1:4–5); 7. Luke (Colossians 4:14); 8. Pentecost (Acts 2:1–3); 9. Repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38); 10. About 3000 (Acts 2:41); 11. Apostles' doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, prayers (Acts 2: 41–42); 12. Antioch (Acts 11:26); 13. Matthias (Acts 1:26); 14. Paul (I Corinthians 15:8); 15. James (Acts 12:1–2); 16. Paul (Acts 22:3, 25); 17. Tarsus (Acts 21:39); 18. Ananias & Sapphira (Acts 5:1–6); 19. Athens (Acts 17:16–22); 20. Eutychus (Acts 20:9); 21. Damascus (Acts 9:3–5).

Showdown: Jesus Versus Satan

Directions: Find your answers in Matthew 4 and Luke 4; John 8:44; Ephesians 6:11; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8; 1 John 3:8

1. Who led Jesus to His temptation? ____ _____
2. Where was Jesus when the "temptations" began? _____
3. Where had Jesus come from immediately prior to the temptations?_____
4. Who tempted Jesus? _____
5. What was the first emptation Jesus faced? _____
6. Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every _____ that proceedeth out of the mouth of _____."
7. To what city did Satan take Jesus during the temptations? _____
8. Who did Satan say would save Jesus if He jumped from the temple?_____
9. Satan said the angels would save Jesus from what injury? _____
10. Jesus said, "Thou shalt not _____ the _____ thy God."
11. What reward did Satan promise if Jesus would worship him? _____ _____
12. Jesus said, "Thou shalt worship the _____ thy ____, and him _____ shalt thou serve."
13. What happened after the third temptation failed? _____
14. What did Jesus say the devil was "from the beginning"? _____
15. To stand against the wiles of the devil, we must put on the _____ _____ of God.
16. If we resist the devil, as Jesus did, what will the devil do? _____
17. Peter pictures the devil as a roaring _____, walking about, seeking whom he may _____.
18. John said, "He that committeth sin is of the _____."
19. Who is said to have sinned "from the beginning"? _____
20. The Son of God came that He might _____ the works of the devil.

What a Book!

This book contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy.

It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter. Here paradise is restored, heaven opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, test the heart, and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully.

George Whitefield said, "God has condescended to become an author; and yet people will not read His writings. There are very few that ever gave this Book of God, the grand charter of salvation, one fair reading through." —Author unknown

Cut out this section and mail it to the address on the front.

Recommended **Resource**

Todd Clippard has committed to reading the Bible daily and sharing his thoughts on each day's reading with you. A missionary, he brings a global perspective to his writing, while remaining down-to-earth. Join us each day in the reading, and share your thoughts as well. To check it out, go to **chaptertochapter.com.**

I want to learn more **about the Bible!**

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_____

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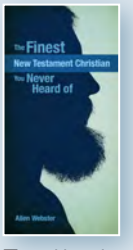

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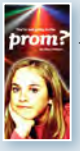

☐ You're Not Going To The Prom?

Don't see the topic you need? Visit **www.housetohouse.com** for more subjects.

VOLUME 21:1

All materials are completely FREE of charge (including shipping in the U.S. or Canada).

When Walter P. Paepeke started a carton company and called it the Container Corporation of America, his attorney said it was "a big name for such a small company." Mr. Paepeke's reply was, "We'll take the name and grow into it."

That's the task we have before us. We have taken a big name—the name of Christ. Now we must grow into it.

There was a wonderful promise given in Isaiah 62:2: "Thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name." Think of it. A new name. Given by the Lord! We see the fulfillment of that promise in Acts 11:26: "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."

Under the name Christian we are to glorify God (1 Peter 4:16), but we know that the name is too big for us. We are an unfinished product, slowly growing into that name. The Bible constantly calls upon us to become more and more like Christ, to "grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Ephesians 4:15).

Are we making progress? Do others recognize Christ in me? Do they find some grace, or receive a kind thought when in contact with me? Am I concerned about the welfare of all those about me? Am I ready to love all people without partiality? Do I show compassion, tenderness, and concern? Am I willing to step out of selfishness into selflessness? Am I kind and gentle to those who are in distress?

—John Gipson

Let's Unite under the Name "Christian"

Henry Ward Beecher said at the Lord's supper: "Let me speak the language of heaven and call you simply Christians."

In his debate with John Eck in 1517, Martin Luther said: "I pray you leave my name alone, and do not call yourselves Lutherans but Christians. Who is Luther? My doctrine is not mine. I have not been crucified for anyone. Paul would not let any call themselves after Paul, nor of Peter but of Christ. How then, does it befit me, a miserable bag of dust and ashes, to give my name to the children of God: Cease my dear friends, to cling to these party names and distinctions: away with all; and let us call ourselves only Christians after him from whom our doctrine comes" (Stork, *The Life of Luther*, p. 289).

John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church, in the preface of his New Testament with Notes (1754, p. 5), wrote: "Would to God that all the party names and unscriptural phrases and forms, which have divided the Christian world were forgotten, and that we might all agree to sit down together as humble loving disciples at the feet of our common Master, to hear His words and imbibe His Spirit and to transform His life into our own."

Bishop Anderson, an Episcopalian of the Diocese of Chicago, in an address before the Commission on Faith and Order, said: "God never made protestant Episcopalians, nor Presbyterians, nor Congregationalists, nor any other sectarian names. He made Christians and they chose to call themselves by less lovely names."

Charles Spurgeon, one of the most recognized Baptist preachers who ever lived, wrote: "I say of the Baptist name, let it perish, but let Christ's name last forever. I look forward with pleasure to the day when there will not be a Baptist living. I hope they will soon be gone. I hope the Baptist name will soon perish; but let Christ's name endure forever" (*Spurgeon's Memorial Library,* Vol. I, p. 168).

P. S. Henson, in an address at Cleveland, Ohio, during the general convention of the Baptist churches, said: "I sometimes feel sorry that the word 'Baptist' which was flung at us by our enemies and stuck, should be our name for often its accent of an act obscures to others our great mission to the world. Perhaps yet we will go back to the name Christian."

Albert Barnes, great Methodist commentator: "These divisions should be merged into the holy name Christian."

The apostle Paul: "Now, this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Corinthians 1:12–13).

Luke: "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26).

The apostle Peter: "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" (1 Peter 4:16).

Thoughts from the HEART

A Persian Proverb

There seems to be a mad rush to identify with every strange teaching that comes down the pike. The current rage is to deny we can "know" anything.

I ran across the following Persian proverb:

He who knows not, and
knows not that he knows not
is a fool; shun him.

He who knows not, and
knows that he knows not,
is a child; teach him.

He who knows, and knows
not that he knows,
is asleep; wake him.

He who knows, and knows
he knows
is wise; follow him.

Remember these verses the next time you read or hear someone denying we can know the truth. —Andrew M. Connally

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

(JOHN 8:32)

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GBN

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