

Psalm 120-121, Isaiah 21-26 (#96) Revised 2024

Psalm 120 — This is a psalm requesting deliverance from deceitful and violent men. *How would you compare the heart of the psalmist with that of his fellow citizens (vv. 5-7)?*

Psalm 121 — This is a song reminding us of God’s provision. *List all the ways God takes care of us as given in this psalm.*

Isaiah 21 — As Isaiah gives an oracle against Babylon (the desert by the sea), he shows that God has control over all the nations of that day. Since Babylon was a major player in world events during the ministry of Isaiah (740 B.C. to 681 B.C.), the exact time of Babylon’s fall is not very clear even though it was most likely in 539 B.C. when the Medes and the Elamites (of Persia) finally conquered them (v. 2). Verses 9 and 10 seem to describe events in the end times when the world system, which is called Babylon, will be destroyed (Revelation 14:8, 18:2). Then Isaiah gives an oracle against Dumah (Edom) in which they ask how much longer they would have to suffer at the hands of the enemy, but in their trial the watchman encourages them to seek the Lord (“Come back again”), which in the end they never do (vv. 11-12). Lastly, an oracle is given against Arabia in which the prophet speaks of the doom of Kedar, a city in northwestern Arabia that had very prosperous trade routes. Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon plundered and destroyed (vv. 13-17). See also Jeremiah 49:28-30. *Where did Edom come from, and what eventually happened to it? See Joshua 24:4.*

Isaiah 22 — As time marches on and Assyria approaches the city of Jerusalem, panic turns into hopelessness which turns into revelry and drunkenness (vv. 1-7). To protect Jerusalem, they fortified the city walls and built a new water system, but never consulted the One who founded this city of David, the Lord of Heaven’s Armies (vv. 8-14). Shebna, the palace steward and second in command to King Hezekiah, prepares for himself a tomb fit for a king, and is only concerned about his own riches and grandeur instead of tending to the needs of the people. Shebna is replaced by Eliakim, who would serve the people faithfully and become a “peg in a secure place (vv. 15-25).” *In this chapter, what did Judah do or fail to do that caused the Lord to say, “Till your dying day this sin will not be atoned for?” See verses 2, 8-11, 12-13.*

Isaiah 23 — Isaiah finishes his oracles of judgment against the nations with his last oracle touching the city-state of Tyre, a powerful merchant among the nations. Tarshish (Spain), Egypt, and the kingdoms of the world mourn and wail over the destruction of this world class seaport. Who planned the desecration of this great merchant city? The Lord of Hosts commanded that this Canaanite fortress be destroyed. Tyre will be brought low and forgotten for seventy years, but then once again she will be back in business. Verse 18 speaks about her profits and wages that will be dedicated to the Lord. This could refer to Tyre helping to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem under Ezra about 520 B.C., or it could be looking forward to the Messianic Kingdom at the end of times. *What was the sin that caused Tyre to be devastated? See verse 9. Give three scriptural references that speak against this sin.*

Isaiah 24 — After the oracle against the various nations of the world, Isaiah proclaims worldwide devastation, mourning, and pollution. The pollution that God speaks of here is not environmental but spiritual. The prophet tells of their defilement because of their transgressing God's commands, breaking the everlasting covenant, and rebelling against God's laws and rule. As the world is being judged, a godly remnant from the west, the east, and the islands of the west will proclaim the majesty and the splendor of the Lord. During this time of world destruction, the hosts of heaven and the kings of the earth will be confined in a dungeon awaiting future judgment. Now the Lord of Heaven's Armies will reign as king with great glory in Jerusalem. *Who are these hosts of heaven described in verse 21, and when does this judgment on them take place? See Ephesians 6:12, Revelation 12:7-9, 20:2-3, 10.*

Isaiah 25 — Isaiah gives a song of praise to the Lord as the believing remnant celebrates the victory of the final judgment of the world. This ultimate triumph by Yahweh will not happen by chance, but will come from plans formed long ago and accomplished with perfect precision and faithfulness (v. 1). On Mount Zion the Lord of Hosts will prepare a magnificent feast with the choicest of foods and fine wine. On that day the Lord will reward the faith of all who waited in hope for His salvation. Death will be destroyed, and God will wipe away all tears from every face. The pride of Moab will be brought to an end, and their high-walled fortress will be thrown to the ground. *After reading verses 6-8, what are some other similar scriptures in the New Testament that touch on these same themes?*

Isaiah 26 — Isaiah breaks out in song as he contemplates the fruitful life of the people of God who have learned to trust the Lord in all circumstances, and thus find perfect peace. God’s people wait on the Lord, walk in path of obedience to His laws, and desire for His name and renown. Even though the wicked received the favor of the Lord, they did not learn righteousness, act justly, or recognize the majesty of the Lord. Therefore, the wicked will be put to shame and God’s fire will consume them. Verse 19 possibly speaks of the resurrection of the Old Testament saints at the beginning of the millennial kingdom of Jesus the Messiah. *1. This chapter gives us several important things we should do to grow in our relationship to God. What are they? See verses 3-4, 8-9. 2. Verse 19 says that the bodies of the dead will rise. What are some of the other verses in the Old and New Testament that proclaim the bodily resurrection of believers?*

Sources for summary and questions: 1. Serendipity Bible for Groups, c. 1988 Littleton, CO. 2. MacArthur Study Bible ESV, c. 1997 Thomas Nelson, Inc. 3. Life Application Bible HCSB, c. 1988 Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 4. The Complete Bible Companion, c. 2014 Barbour Publishing, Inc., Uhrichsville, OH. 5. ESV Study Bible, c. 2008 Crossway Bibles, Wheaton, IL. 6. The World Bible Handbook, Lawrence Richards, Word Inc., Waco, TX. 7. The Quest Study Bible NIV, c. 1994 Zondervan Publishing & Christianity Today, Grand Rapids, MI & Wheaton, IL. 8. The Transformation Study Bible, c. 2009 David C. Cook. 9. Halley’s Bible Handbook, c. 2000 Zondervan Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI. 10. 500 Answers from the Bible, c. 2006 Barbour Publishing, Uhrichsville, OH. 11. Understanding the Bible, c. 2000 Holman Publishers, Nashville, TN. 12. Homan Bible Handbook, c. 1992 Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN. 13. Moody Bible Commentary, c. 2014 Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL.

Psalm 122-123, Isaiah 27-32 (#97) Revised 2024

Psalm 122 — This is a psalm sung by the Israelites as they made their pilgrimage to Jerusalem. *What are some things that these pilgrims are instructed to do?*

Psalm 123 — This psalm is an expectant prayer to God for mercy and relief from prideful contempt. *Are you actually expecting an answer when you pray?*

Isaiah 27 — This passage speaks of the powerful Leviathan, the mythical monster of the sea, who symbolizes great hatred and antagonism toward God by the nations. Although the powers of the world appear to be winning, they are no match for the omnipotent God. The remnant of Israel is advised to “Hide for a little while until the wrath is passed (26:20).” When Christ returns at the end of the tribulation period, He will vanquish the armies of the world that are against Israel, and then He will fulfill His promise that “Jacob will take root and Israel will blossom and bloom, and fill the whole world with fruit (Zechariah 14:3-5, verse 6).” God would perform another Exodus miracle, and the Jewish people, upon hearing the sound of the trumpet, will one by one return to Jerusalem to worship Yahweh. *What is the name of the Jewish festival that is spoken of here, where Israel will hear the sound of the trumpet, and on what exact day of the year (using Hebrew calendar) will it take place? See Leviticus 23:23-32.*

Isaiah 28 — First, the Lord declares judgment on Ephraim (Israel) for their pride and their captivation with wine. Just like God’s judgment on Syria to the north, Assyria will come down and trample Ephraim to the ground, their beauty will fade, and they will be no more. However, for the godly remnant who trust in Him, the Lord of Heaven’s Armies will be their pride and joy and give them great courage in the face of the enemy. Judah and their leaders, including the priests and prophets, are also consumed by

wine and strong drink. God offers them rest, but Judah doesn't think they need Him because they have covered all their bases so that disaster will not touch them. The truth is that there is only one who can be trusted for refuge and stability, and that is the precious cornerstone, the Messiah (v. 16). God urges the people to wake up and realize their precarious position because of the coming destruction of the whole land. Just as the Lord gives wisdom to the farmer who knows perfectly the timing for plowing, sowing, and reaping and knows the precise tool and method to use in order to get the best results from each crop, so Yahweh has perfect wisdom like this farmer to bring about His purposes to produce a harvest of righteousness and justice. *What blessings from God did the remnant of God-fearing people have during this time of judgment? See verses 5-6, 16-17, 21, and 29.*

Isaiah 29 — This chapter looks at the future invasion of Assyria in 701 B.C. when the enemy will surround the city of Jerusalem and build siege ramps against the walls to gain access to the city of David so that they can completely destroy it and everyone in it. The leaders of Ariel (Jerusalem) do not deserve to be saved since they really don't want the Lord to interfere with their plans to find their savior in Egypt, but not in Him. They still do the rituals, sacrifices, and festivals, but their worship consists of man-made rules and is not done from the heart (v. 13). At the last moment, when the city is brought to utter despair and hopelessness by the siege (v. 4), in an instant, the Lord of hosts will consume and completely destroy the enemy's army with thunder, earthquake, and a great noise (vv. 5-6). The words "all of the many nations going out to battle against Ariel (v. 7)," and "In that day (v. 18)," indicate a future battle of the nations with Israel at the end of days (Zechariah 14:3-5, Revelation 19:11-16). In that day the deaf will hear, the blind will see, and all Israel will honor and stand in awe of the Holy One of Jacob. *After reading verses 13 to 16, what are the three great sins of Judah? How does this apply to the lives of Christians today?*

Isaiah 30:1-18 — The first 17 verses are a scathing indictment against the leaders of Judah who travel to Egypt with gifts and bribes to encourage them to form an alliance so they will be protected from Assyria's army. God says they carry out a plan and make an alliance against His will, and the end of it all will be Judah's shame because Egypt's help is completely worthless. God tells Isaiah to write down a permanent record of this rebellious people for their disobedience to the Lord's instruction, which will ultimately lead to sudden collapse and complete humiliation. Amazingly, the Lord is waiting to show mercy and compassion if Judah will return and patiently wait for Him. *What were the steps Israel should have followed in order to honor the Lord and receive His blessing? See verses 1-2, 9, 15, and 18.*

Isaiah 30:19-33 — This last part of the chapter changes in tone from one of rebellion of God's people to that of restoration. The once insensitive people will be transformed by God's grace to a people who hear the voice of God their teacher. He will give them direction in the way they should go. After throwing away their idols, the Lord will bless them with wonderful harvests and give them victory over their enemies on every side. As the people of God sing songs of joy, the Lord will display His strength by striking down the Assyrians with a consuming fire, a torrent of rain, and hailstones. *In verses 18-33, what images, names, and verbs are associated with God, and what do they teach us about God? #1 p. 915*

Isaiah 31 — Throughout its history, Israel was tempted to go down to Egypt to receive help in various ways. In this chapter the leaders in Jerusalem thought more of the power of Egypt's horses, chariots, and horsemen than in the Holy one of Israel. Yahweh says that Judah needs to count on the Lord of Heaven's Armies to come down and fight for them against Assyria. God will protect, rescue, and deliver Jerusalem without the help of anyone else. *What is the major lesson taught in this chapter which we must constantly remember throughout our whole life?*

Isaiah 32 — Isaiah now moves to the future in the end times when the Messiah King will reign in righteousness, and the princes under Him will rule in justice. The nation of Israel will have a new heart (Jeremiah 31:31-34), with new eyes and ears to see and understand the truth. A fool will not be considered noble, nor the scoundrel be seen as honorable (vv. 1-8). Isaiah then returns to the present, where the complacent and overconfident women of Judah are warned that within a year they will tremble with fear, and their ungodly society will fall because the people have abandoned their God (vv. 9-14). The author quickly returns to the future when the Spirit from heaven will be poured out on the righteous messianic kingdom, and all things will dramatically change, bringing peace, prosperity, and security. *Give the blessings of Christ's messianic rule on the earth found in this chapter.*

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Psalm 124-125, Isaiah 33-39 (#98) Revised 2024

Psalm 124 — The psalmist considers what their life would be like without God's help. *What would your life look like without God's help and love?*

Psalm 125 — This is a prayer for those who trust in God. *Since all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), What is the difference between the upright and the crooked (vv 4-5).*

Isaiah 33 — This chapter reveals the near future invasion of Assyria upon Jerusalem by King Sennacherib and his army. Verse two reveals the secret of the victory over Assyria, which is the power of the praying minority led by Isaiah. The fearsome Assyrian army will be no match for the great Yahweh of heaven who will provide a rich store of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge for those who fear Him. This wicked, proud, covenant breaking nation who has no respect for anyone, has more than met their match when 185,000 soldiers are struck down by the angel of the Lord in one night (37:35). The wicked in Jerusalem will tremble in fear when the army approaches, but the righteous will be purified, protected, and satisfied. Isaiah then looks ahead to the future where he sees the Messiah King in His beauty (v. 17), who is also our judge and lawgiver (v. 22). He will not only save His people but will also bring physical and spiritual wholeness (v. 24). *What are the six characteristics of the righteous remnant in Judah to whom God promised protection and provision? What is necessary for us to become this type of person?*

Isaiah 34 — Isaiah invites the nations of the earth to see His final decimation of its armies because of their willful pride and unabated rebellion. Edom, the descendants of Jacob's brother Esau, is singled out for destruction because of its hostility toward Zion. Isaiah gives the picture of the Lord offering the wicked people as sacrifices instead of animals. Edom's judgment will be so complete that instead of the land being populated with people, it will only have desert creatures. *Comparing verses 1-4 with Revelation 6:12-17, what future event in history do these verses describe?*

Isaiah 35 — Now that God’s judgment on the earth is complete, Yahweh will inaugurate the most beautiful era of human history, the millennial reign of Jesus the Messiah on the earth. After reading the oracles of destruction on the nations (34:1-4), now we see the earth being transformed into something similar to the Garden of Eden. Everything from the healing of humankind from its disabilities and sicknesses to the incredible productivity of the well-watered land, will be a part of this kingdom age where the glory and splendor of the Lord will be displayed. The redeemed will joyfully walk in God’s ways and travel the Highway of Holiness to Jerusalem to worship Yahweh. *List the spiritual and physical blessings of the redeemed during the kingdom age that are given in this chapter.*

Isaiah 36 — In 701 B.C. Sennacherib, king of Assyria, and his army of 185,000 attacked and captured all of the cities of Judah and now comes to Jerusalem to finish the task of complete victory over Judah. The Assyrian field commander, Rabshakeh, meets with King Hezekiah’s representatives outside the gate of Jerusalem. The message that Rabshakeh gives to Hezekiah is one of the most insolent and blasphemous recorded in the Holy Scriptures. First, Judah is rightly rebuked because of their trust in Egypt, who is described as a splintered reed of a staff. Secondly, he wrongly accuses Hezekiah of offending Yahweh for tearing down the high places and the altars to centralize all worship in the temple in Jerusalem. Rabshakeh shouts in the Hebrew language to the people listening on the wall that they shouldn’t be deceived by Hezekiah’s words and that the Lord will certainly deliver them. Then he asks this question, “Who of all the gods (of the other countries) has been able to save the land from me? How then can the Lord deliver Jerusalem from my hand (v. 20 NIV).” *Explain how Rabshakeh was misinformed about (1) the removing of the high places and altars in Judah by Hezekiah (v. 7), and, (2) that Yahweh, the God of Samaria (Israel) did not deliver them. Remember Assyria completely conquered Israel in 722 B.C.*

Isaiah 37 — Upon hearing the arrogant words from Sennacherib’s field commander, King Hezekiah tore his clothes in mourning and sent Eliakim and others to Isaiah to ask for his intercession and seek an answer from the Lord. The Lord responds to Hezekiah’s plea by assuring him that He has heard the blasphemy of the king of Assyria and will act on their behalf. Therefore, he and his people should not be afraid of the army of Assyria. When the king of Assyria put greater pressure on Judah to surrender,

Hezekiah took the letter he received, and spread it before the Lord, and fervently sought for deliverance. In his prayer he recognized the Lord as the sovereign ruler of the universe who alone deserved the honor and glory. In response to his prayer, the Lord speaks directly to Sennacherib's pride and arrogance by declaring his defeat and ultimate death. To Hezekiah, the Lord guarantees protection and deliverance for Jerusalem in order to bring glory to Himself and because of His servant David. That night the angel of the Lord came into the camp of Assyria and struck down 185,000 soldiers. *How did Hezekiah respond to the threat of Sennacherib, and what truths did he understand about God (see verses 14-20)?*

Isaiah 38-39 — Chapters 38 and 39 take place before the invasion of Assyria (chapter 37) and 38:21-22 belong between verses 6 and 7 of chapter 38. Hezekiah is informed by the prophet Isaiah that he has an illness that will end in death and so must put his house in order. Upon hearing the news of his death, Hezekiah cries out to the Lord in prayer with bitter weeping reminding the Lord how he has faithfully and wholeheartedly served Him. God quickly answers his prayer, and extends his life 15 more years, and gives him a sign by having the sundial go back 10 steps. Hezekiah writes a psalm of praise showing gratitude for answered prayer and confessing his sins, including pride. In chapter 39 Hezekiah succumbs to pride and shows to the envoys of Babylon all of the riches of Judah. Isaiah rebukes the king for his self-sufficiency and pride prophesying that in the future the armies of this far away country would take all the people and their riches, including Hezekiah's royal descendants, to Babylon. *In verse 22, Hezekiah asks for a sign that he will be healed and God gives it to him in verse 7 (see also II Kings 20:7-11). How does this contrast with the response of his father Ahaz to Isaiah (7:10-14). What does this verse say about Hezekiah, Ahaz, and God?*

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Psalm 126-127, Obadiah, I Peter 1-5 (#99) Revised 2024

Psalm 126 — This is a song celebrating the return of the Israelites from the Babylonian captivity. *Read verses 5 and 6. How can these verses be related to our concern with the lost souls of men and women who need to know Christ?*

Psalm 127 — This psalm is a reminder that we need God's guidance, providence, peace, and prosperity. *What is the spiritual lesson taught in verses 1-2 that we can apply to our lives? What are verses 3-5 teaching about children that seems to be opposed to so many in our society?*

Obadiah — This is the shortest book of the Old Testament by an obscure author who wrote his book to declare God's judgment on the nation of Edom because of their evil treatment of Israel. The exact time Obadiah was written is most likely between 605 B.C. and 586 B.C., although it is possible that it was written during the reign of Jehoram of Judah from 855 B.C. to 840 B.C. Edom's great arrogance and false sense of security would eventually lead them to destruction. Edom descended from Esau, the brother of Jacob. While traveling in the wilderness heading for the Promised Land, Edom would not let Israel pass through their land but forced them to take a long way around. In New Testament times the Edomites were called Idumeans with the most famous one being Herod the Great.

Obadiah — The city of Petra was located in an invincible location in the "cleft of the rock" where the people felt secure from any enemy, but God promised Edom that He would bring them down and destroy them because of the violence they had done to their bother, Jacob, and also for their boastful pride. Edom gloated over Judah in the day of Jacob's calamity and plundered them. The people of Edom will reap what they have sown, and God's judgment will return on their own heads. However, God's people need not fret because He will deliver Mount Zion, and the Israelites will possess the hill country of Esau and the mountains of Edom, and these lands will be part of the Lord's holy kingdom. *Why did Edom feel so secure and invincible?*

I Peter — “But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed (4:13 ESV).” About 64 A.D. Peter wrote a letter of encouragement and hope to the churches and Christians scattered throughout Asia Minor who were beginning to suffer persecution at the hands of Caesar. The themes of the book are: (1) Living a life of hope and holiness (1:1-2:3); (2) Christ the cornerstone and we His chosen people (2:4-10); (3) The Church a witness in the world through submission to authorities and suffering like Jesus (2:11-3:7); (4) Responding to suffering in a way that honors Christ who set an example for us (3:8-4:19); and (5) Rewards for faithful servants, and the call to be alert, resist the enemy, and stand firm in the faith (5:1-11).

I Peter 1 — Peter speaks of the living hope (gk: elpis “future certainty”) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Knowing that we have an imperishable inheritance stored up in heaven, we can undergo sufferings here in this life. Peter said that patient endurance under persecution proved the genuineness of our faith, with the final result being the salvation of our souls. We are called to live a holy life in all our conduct, since we were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ and realize that someday we will be judged impartially by Him. Since you have been born again by trusting in Christ, now you must live a life of purity and a sincere love for all the brothers and sisters. *What were the reasons Christians were going through suffering and persecution at this time?*

I Peter 2 — A new believer must thirst for the pure milk of the Word of God so that his or her life can grow and be transformed. Christ is the chief cornerstone who has called us to be a royal priesthood with Him. Our lives are to be lived by abstaining from fleshly desires and living in such a godly way among unbelievers that it will be a testimony to them. Christians are to do good and be subject to human authority in order to silence foolish people who say evil things about them. It honors God when one suffers unjustly and endures it patiently. The calling of a Christian is to bear up under suffering since our Lord first set the example by suffering unjustly and patiently entrusting “Himself to the One who judges justly (v. 23b HCSB).” *From this chapter, make two columns with the first column listing that which we are to do as Christians and the other column detailing the things we are not to do.*

I Peter 3 — This chapter continues with Peter’s theme of submission and now includes the marriage relationship and the local church. In verses 1 to 6, the words are directed more for a Christian wife who has an unbelieving husband, although the principles given apply to all marriages. When a wife lives her

life with a heart of submission and gentleness, her husband can be drawn to Christ through her testimony. Husbands must be understanding and sensitive to their wives so that their prayers will be answered (vv. 1-7). In our relationships with each other in the church, Peter touches on five qualities we need to exercise: unity, sensitivity to the needs of others, brotherly love, compassion, and humility (vv. 8-12). As a Christian there are times we suffer undeservedly, and so we need give an answer of the hope we have in Christ to those who ask us. Christ suffered for our sins to bring us into a relationship with God (vv. 13-18). Verses 19 to 20 seem to say that between the time of the death of Jesus and His resurrection, Jesus visited the imprisoned spirit beings (probably fallen angels) in the realm of the dead who were condemned eternally, and He proclaimed to them His victory over Satan and his evil forces. *This chapter emphasizes the fact that Christians are to radiate a Christ-like life. List from this chapter at least 10 godly virtues or actions that a Christian should have in his life in order to be a witness to the world. Which one of these do you need most to grow in?*

I Peter 4 — Peter wrote this epistle to prepare Christians for the suffering they would endure at the hands of the unbelievers and the Roman officials. Suffering does the work of transforming us into the image of Christ and prepares us for eternity. The world is surprised that we don't participate with them in wild living, and they will someday be justly judged for their ungodly lifestyle (vv. 1-6). How can we bring glory to God? By showing our intense love to each other, practicing hospitality, and serving one another through the use of our spiritual gifts (vv. 7-11). The last eight verses of this chapter put the suffering of Christians in perspective. First, we shouldn't be surprised by suffering but we must understand that the final outcome of that suffering will be the great joy that we experience when Christ returns. Second, it is a shame to suffer for doing evil but an immense privilege to undergo fiery trials for the name of Jesus Christ. If God allows Christians who sin to be severely disciplined in this life, you can surely believe that the ungodly who reject the gospel will receive eternal judgment in the next life. No matter what suffering you might endure in this life, you need to learn to entrust yourselves to the faithful Creator (vv. 12-19). *Do you recognize that every Christian suffers in this life one way or another (II Timothy 3:12)? How best can you prepare yourself for the suffering that will come? For anyone who has already gone through great suffering, what advice can you give the rest of us?*

I Peter 5 — First, Peter exhorts the elders and pastors (shepherds) of the churches to be faithful in their calling by not by seeking money or power but by leading through a godly example. Humility is the most important ingredient needed in our relationships with each other. Since we know that God really cares for us, we can be free from cares and anxiety. We should never be caught off guard by the schemes of the Devil, who can overpower us if we are caught sleeping. Remember that God never allows anything in our lives to get out of His control, and His dominion over everything is forever. *What do we need to do to prepare ourselves from being devoured by the Devil? After we have gone through a period of suffering, what will God do for us?*

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