

Who Do You Say That I Am?

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository
Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**

110- Jesus Chooses His Apostles- Part 7
John- Part 1

Church August 18, 2024

Matthew 10:1-4

1 Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;

3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus;

4 Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him.

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Now, toward the End of my Sermon last week- I gave you all a Homework Assignment. And that Assignment was to list the twelve Apostles. And the Reason I asked you to do this- is because of what **The Revelation 21:14** says,

And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

And in this verse- John said that the Wall of the City of New Jerusalem (that will come down out of Heaven and sit upon the earth) has twelve foundation Stones that have the names of the twelve Apostles written on them. And the Apostle John wrote this verse as he was “moved” by God the Holy Spirit. And that means that this verse is Inspired; Inerrant; as well as Infallible. So, it ought to be very simple then for us to write down the names of the twelve Apostles.

And here in **Matthew 10:1-4**- Brother Vern just read their names for us. And here is that List:

1. Simon Peter
2. Andrew
3. James, the son of Zebedee
4. John
5. Philip
6. Bartholomew
7. Thomas
8. Matthew, the tax collector
9. James, the son of Alpheus
10. Thaddeus (Nathaniel)
11. Simon, the Zealot
12. Judas Iscariot

... but we know that, about two years AFTER this moment in Matthew's Gospel Record, Judas Iscariot *betrayed* the Lord and then committed suicide. And then in **The Acts 1:23-26**, Dr. Luke wrote:

23 So they put forward two men, Joseph called Barsabbas (who was also called Justus), and Matthias.

24 And they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all men, show which one of these two You have chosen

25 to occupy this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place."

26 And they drew lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

... so, we see that the Apostles brought two men forward who were candidates to fill the "open seat" that was vacated by Judas' Betrayal and Suicide:

1. Joseph or Barsabbas or Justus
2. Matthias

... and the eleven Apostles "*drew Lots*" and Luke told us,

... the lot fell to Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

Now there is some Controversy about the Practice that we see in the Bible of "*casting or drawing Lots*". And I probably need to do a "White Paper" on this Issue. But suffice it to say that "*casting or drawing Lots*" was a *biblical* Method of making Decisions back in the 1st Century. And in **Leviticus 16:8** the Lord God Himself told Moses,

Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats, one lot for the Lord and the other lot for the scapegoat.

... and even though “*casting or drawing Lots*” supposedly involved “*Chance*”- in **Proverbs 16:33**, the Bible assures us that even with a Method involving “*Chance*”- that God is always Sovereign over the Result when it says,

The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the Lord.

So, there were originally twelve Apostles. But when Judas Iscariot betrayed the Lord and committed suicide- there were eleven. And then after the eleven Apostles “*drew Lots*”- Matthias was chosen to replace Judas- and now there are twelve Apostles again. Question answered, right?

Not so fast! Because as we read **The Book of the Acts of the Apostles**- we read about a man named “*Saul of Tarsus*”; an unsaved and sinful Pharisee, who was highly educated and highly respected, who, for some reason later on, took on the Roman name of, “*Paul*”, and then wrote 13 of the 21 Epistles! And in **2Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 1:1; Colossians 1:1; 1Timothy 1:1; and 2Timothy 1:1**- this man identified himself as,

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God...

... and even though Paul was NOT part of the original twelve men that Jesus Himself chose- none of the original Apostles *challenged* Paul’s Assertion that he was an Apostle; nor did they challenge *anything* that Paul wrote. And based on that- we need to *include* Paul in the ranks of the Apostles- which now numbers 13 men.

So, who are the “**twelve Apostles of the Lamb**” as recorded in **The Revelation 21:14**? In other words, which one of these 13 men will NOT have his name written on the twelve foundation stones under the Wall of the City of New Jerusalem?

Some say that Paul’s name will be left out because he wasn’t chosen by the other Apostles as was Matthias. But others teach that Matthias’ name will be left out because of how important Paul was to the early Church.

There are people who favor the Apostle Paul over Mathias because Matthias is not mentioned anywhere in the New Testament after he was chosen. But nothing is mentioned about several of the men, whom were chosen by Jesus Himself. Others, who find Fault with the eleven Apostles “*casting Lots*” say that Matthias

was *inferior* because he was chosen by a “Game of Chance” while Paul was chosen by the Lord Himself.

But the Answer is: WE DON’T KNOW! We all have our Opinions and while some Opinions are more educated than others- the Bible is silent about this Issue and so, we don’t know.

Now the Reason I went through this with you was to illustrate a Concept that was made famous during the Protestant Reformation called, “*Sola Scriptura*”. And that Concept teaches that the official Doctrine that the Christian Church teaches and believes- MUST come from the Scriptures and from the Scriptures ALONE! And since the Bible is silent about this Issue- we must also be silent. We do NOT have the Authority or the Right to teach something because we personally find it attractive; or because we personally hold to it. And we certainly should NOT *impose* our personal Beliefs on to others.

Now while it is true that the Concept of “*Sola Scriptura*” has to do with us obtaining; believing; and then teaching our official Doctrine from the Scriptures ALONE- that does NOT mean we can’t use other Books to help us do that.

For example, the Bible was NOT written in English. It was originally written in Koine Greek; Hebrew; and Aramaic. And while most of our English Bibles are reliable and trustworthy- serious Students of the Scriptures should either learn to read; write; and speak in fluent Greek; Hebrew; and Aramaic (and I would add Latin to that List) OR they should purchase Dictionaries; Thesauruses; as well as other Language Tools that will help us to understand the Bible.

We need to understand that words mean things. And we do NOT have the Authority to place our *own* Definition on a word that has already been defined. Words mean what their *historic* Definitions say they mean. And they DON’T mean anything else.

Now the 40 men whom God the Holy Spirit “moved” on to pen down the 66 Books of the Bible were NOT given “Dictation”. God also did NOT literally take their hand and move it across the scroll. These men wrote what was in their minds to write. And they wrote the Words of Scripture down- using their own Language; their own Logic; and their own “*Figures of Speech*”. And SOMEHOW- and we really don’t know how- God so *superintended* the Production of the Scriptures that what they wrote is the Inspired; Inerrant; and Infallible Word of the living God!

And one of the most important Efforts that the Student of Scripture needs to be successful in- is to arrive at the correct “Context” of the verse; or the Passage; or the Chapter; or even the entire Book. And since none of us have NEVER lived in 1st Century Israel- in order to follow the Concept of “*Sola Scriptura*”- we need other Books that will help us arrive at the correct Context. Because the Bible does NOT mean what it means to us. The Bible means what it meant to the man, who

wrote it- in the Context of *why* he was writing it; at the Time he wrote it; and to the people he wrote it to.

For example, many of the Terms that we find on the pages in the Bible were well known by the people who lived in the 1st Century in Israel. But we live in the 21st Century. And we live in America. And so, in order for us to understand what those terms mean- we need a good and reliable Greek; Hebrew; or Aramaic Lexicon that will help us to arrive at the correct Context.

But I pray you hear me when I tell you that people who want to simply skip over the hard work of arriving at the correct Context- and then use “cop-out” Statements like, “*Well, the Lord showed me this or that*” are NOT using the Concept of Sola Scriptura- and we should not listen to those people at all.

Now this is a section in our verse-by-verse “Journey” through **Matthew** where Jesus chooses 12 men to carry on the Ministry of the New Covenant- after He has ascended back up into Heaven. And in verse 2, the Apostle Matthew refers to these 12 men as “Apostles”. And so, these twelve men have been chosen out of the larger group of Disciples; or Mathetes; or Students- which numbered about 200. And the Disciples came out of the much *larger* Group- numbering anywhere from 10-30,000 people that followed Jesus everywhere. So, the Apostles are a Group out of a Group; that came out of another Group.

But neither the vast Sea of Humanity that was following Jesus; nor the Disciples- changed the world. The men who literally changed the world were the twelve Apostles! And these were the men, who were Jesus’ own personal “*Shailia*”; or “*Messengers*”; or “*Sent Ones*”. And they spoke the very SAME Message that Jesus spoke; and they were given the very SAME supernatural Power to heal Disease; raise the Dead; and cast out demons that Jesus had.

So, Jesus is now multiplying Himself by a factor of 12. And even though we still have about 18 more Chapters in **Matthew** to go through- *chronologically*, there are only about two years left of Jesus’ earthly Ministry. So, the next 18 Chapters will contain tremendous Teaching that- when put into use- should alter the Way we live our Lives.

So, it is arguably true that these are the men, who were used by God- perhaps MORE that God has ever used anyone before or since. And that is why I am “camping out” on these first four verses of **Matthew 10**- so we can take the Time to meet each one of these men. Remember, **Hebrews 13:7** says,

Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.

... and more than any other human being- the Faith of these men should be what we imitate the MOST!

Now these twelve men are very real people- who have a very *unique* Calling; and a very *unique* Ministry to receive; and then write down (or have written down) the 27 Books of the New Covenant. And then God empowered them to give Divine Credibility on those 27 Books through Miracles; Signs and Wonders; and Gifts of the Holy Spirit. And that would be enough.

But we also know that these men will rule over the twelve Tribes of Israel when Jesus comes back. And we also know that when the City of New Jerusalem comes down out of Heaven and sits upon the new Earth- the names of the Apostles on the twelve foundation Stones underneath the twelve Gates that give Entrance to that City!

But one of the most remarkable things about these men is that they were so “Common”. None of them came from the religious Elite or the Nobility of that Day- except Judas, who betrayed the Lord and Saul of Tarsus later on.

The only one, who had any money, was a sinful tax Collector, who had betrayed the Jews, named Matthew or Levi- who earned his money by Graft and Corruption. Now, later on, we will find that Paul was taken out from the Pharisees- but not any of these *original* men were Priests. None of these men were taken from the Scribes. And none of them were taken from the Sadducees; or the religious Nobility; or the religious Elite. None of them, that we know of, had anything to do with Jerusalem- which was the Center of Religion and Politics in that day and where all the “*Movers and Shakers*” of 1st Century Israel were.

These men were, primarily, from Galilee, which meant they were blue-collar, uneducated, and common men. The only one who wasn't a Galilean was Judas the Traitor- who was from an area called, “*Kerioth*” that was later on *transliterated* to read, “*Iscariot*”.

And coming from Galilee- they would have been looked down upon by the Leaders of Israel- who would have seen them as being the “*riff-raff*”; the “*low class common folk*”; and the “*hoi polloi*”. But isn't it just like the Lord to choose the Common people- to not only be saved but also to formulate and lead the Church?

But as far as humans go- this is simply NOT the Way to begin a new Religion. If you were going to start a new Religion- you would get the “Rich”; the “Elite”; and the “Connected”. You would want as many people as possible to be a part of your new Religion, right? So, you would NEVER in a thousand years choose the “motley crew” that Jesus chose. Yet that's who Jesus chose; and that's who Jesus used- to literally turn the world upside down!

And so, we're meeting the very common men- who have been assigned THE SINGLE most Uncommon Ministry! And we have already met Peter- the remarkable, unforgettable Peter; the Leader, the one Jesus called the, *protos*, or the

first one; or the *primary one*; or the *chief one*- who was always the Leader; and who was always at the top of the four Lists found in **Matthew, Mark, Luke and the Acts**. And so, **Simon** Peter is first. Peter is the Spokesman of the Apostles- not just for himself but for the others many times in the Gospel Records. He was the most verbal one of all; the most overt; the most flamboyant; and the unquestioned Leader.

And we have also met Peter's brother, Andrew- who was just the opposite of Peter: behind the scenes; quiet; Andrew, the Missionary, who was always bringing people to Jesus. The Self-effacing; meek; unassuming; non-assertive Andrew.

And then, last time, we met James. James, one of the "sons of thunder"; *Boanerges*; bold; ambitious; zealous; passionate; and violent. And now today, we are being introduced to, perhaps the second or third most well- know Apostles- after Peter and Paul- whose name was, "John".

Now John's name was NOT, "John". The name, "*John*" is what is called a "*theophoric name*"¹- originating from the Hebrew name, "*Yohanan*" or "*Yochanan*"- which means: *YHWH has been gracious*. That Hebrew name was brought into Greek as "*Ioannis*"; and was later *transliterated* into Latin as "*Iohannes*"; which was brought into Middle English (12th Century) as, "*Jon*"; "*Ihon*"; "*Jon*"; or "*Jan*". From there it was brought into English as "John"; or "Jon".

Now besides being the brother of James and a fisherman, as well as a "Son of Thunder"- John was the writer of 5 New Testament Books:

- **The Gospel of John**
- **1,2, & 3 John** (Epistles)
- **The Revelation** (Prophecy)

So, we have a lot of Information that John has provided for us- "*Divine Revelation*"- would actually be a better way to term it. John has given us the Story of Jesus in his Gospel Record. And he has given us three very powerful Epistles in which the Holy Spirit inspired him to write that teach us what determines a true Believer and how to live after we are saved. And John was also used by God to give us the final Vision of the victorious Christ- that is termed, the "*Apocalypse*" or "*The Revelation of Jesus Christ as given to St. John the Divine*".

Now we learn about how John views the Life; Ministry; Death; Resurrection; and Ascension of Jesus by reading his Gospel Record. And John's "*Story of Jesus*" is called, the "*Spiritual Gospel*"- in that it deals with Jesus' full

¹ A "*Theophoric*" name (Literally, *bearing or carrying a god*) is a name that embeds the word equivalent of "God" in a person's name, which also reflects something about the person.

Deity more than the other three. And we can learn how John sees the Church; Salvation; Holiness; Sin- through his three Epistles. And we can learn how John sees “*Last Things*” or *Eschatology*” from what he wrote in **The Revelation**.

Now, for some Reason- John is usually depicted in paintings and sculptures as a very tender, almost effeminate man, who usually had doe-like eyes; and was always physically near Jesus. But nothing could be further from the Truth. John was, first of all- a fisherman. And no fisherman back in the 1st Century could afford to be soft or tender. They were all hard-working men- who usually fished all night long. They were usually very violent men, who all had gnarly hands from repairing their nets. And when not fishing- most fishermen back in the 1st Century were usually fighting. There is a Reason Jesus called he and his brother, James, *Sons of Thunder*” and it wasn’t for their Gentleness!

But when you read **1John**- the Apostle is very “black and white”. You are either fish on the right side or fish on the left. You are a child of God or a child of the devil. You are a sheep or a goat. You are in the Church or you are out of it! And John gets very *narrow* in the Way he describes a genuine Believer versus someone who is simply deceived. So, in **1John 3: 6-9**, the Apostle says,

6 No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.

7 Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous;

8 the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.

9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

It is from verses like this that John wrote that some have *misinterpreted* what he was meaning- and they have developed wayward Teachings that say things like, “*A genuine Christian CANNOT ever sin*”; and “*If anyone ever sins- he isn’t saved!*”- which is NOT what John meant by this Passage.

But I will be honest with you. I went verse-by-verse through every word of **1John** several years ago in this Church; and from that “Journey” through **1John**- I developed 292- 15- minute radio Broadcasts from these five Chapters. But I had to periodically stop reading John and read some of Paul’s writings to try to keep my head on straight.

I’m not saying that John was wrong- he wasn’t. John was as “right as rain”. But John wrote in Absolutes. Everything is “black” or it’s “white” with this man.

Nothing is nuanced; there are no “grey areas” with this man. You either ARE or you’re NOT! And that’s fine- as long as you understand that what John said MUST be put into its proper Context. For example, look at **1John 3:9**:

No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

Oaky. There it is- plain as day. John said what he said. But are we to assume, from what John said here- that born again Believers CANNOT ever sin? No! So, what John said MUST be put into its correct and full Context. So, what John was saying here is...

No one who is born of God practices sin [on an ongoing basis- without being convicted and without turning from it].

... and then we are to understand the *last part* of that verse as saying,

because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin [without being convicted and turning from it], **because he is born of God.**

So, John was NOT teaching that born again Believers never sin at all. The other 65 Books teach that *everybody* sins. But when genuine Believers sin- they are *always* convicted; and they *always* repent. And so, a genuine Believer simply CANNOT engage in open, public, and blatant Sin- *without being convicted and without turning from it*. That is what **1John 3:9** means.

So, the Miracle of the New Birth does NOT eliminate ALL Sin in us- forever! We will NOT know that Victory until we are in Heaven in a glorified Body. But what the Miracle of the New Birth DOES do- is to *always* bring Conviction to the Believer when and if he sins. And God the Holy Spirit *always* will give that person both the Desire and the Power to turn from that Sin!

So, yes! John was writing as he was “moved” by God the Holy Spirit. And so, what John wrote is fully Inspired; Inerrant; and Infallible! But what John wrote has to be taught; and it has to be understood in its correct Context- or those who read John- will get into serious Error very quickly!

Now as I have told you before- every list of the Apostles in the Bible has three Groups of four people in each Group. And the people in the Groups are always the same. And each Group are in *decreasing* Intimacy with Christ. Peter, James, and John, along with Andrew are the *closest* to Jesus. And then the 2nd Group is a little further away; and the 3rd Group, were not really close to Christ at

all. They don't appear in intimate Association with Jesus- in *comparison* to the first Group.

But the Groups are always the same. And Group #1 is always Peter, James, John and Andrew. But of those four- the three men, who were the most *intimate* with Jesus are, Peter, James and John.

And probably John would be the one about whom we know the most about next to Peter and maybe Paul. And we have a lot more writing from John than we do Peter- since Peter only wrote two Epistles. So, John takes up a huge part of the New Testament by his five Books.

Now I said all that to say this: last Time, we talked about James. And all I could do was give you a Silhouette of this man because we don't have that much about either Andrew or James. But there is a lot to see and to know about John- so, beginning today- I'm going to give you a biographical sketch- a Portrait of the Apostle John.

Now John is the brother of James. And in verse 2- Matthew wrote,

... James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother...

... now it doesn't say that here- but James and John were in the fishing business along with Peter and Andrew. So, there four men all worked together every day; they were all close friends; and they were business partners.

Now in order to get a grip on John without going through everything that we could in the New Testament- what I want to do is give you a sort of Framework. If you have two things in mind- you have a Framework to understand John. And those two things can be summed up in two words that are primary words in Christian Revelation and Christian Vocabulary. Two things characterize John:

1. Truth
2. Love

You see, dear friends, all the New Testament material on John, everything we could say about John in kind of giving you the Picture of this man is going to hang on a framework of both Truth and Love! Those two Realities; those two spiritual Realities that are so critical to the Kingdom of God- they are absolutely Irreplaceable and Essential, and actually Inseparable from each other- and they are the two foundational Realities about this man named, John.

If you want to know how to describe John- you can describe John as a man of Truth and a man of Love. And that is the most *desirable* mix possible. If you could want *anything* for yourself; if you could wish for *anything* in your own personal Sanctification- wish for that! If you could pursue *anything*- pursue that!

Pursue a perfect Balance of a spiritual Mix of Truth and Love. Know the Truth and hold that *absolute* Truth with *undying* Love.

And, in Reality- it is impossible to have one without the other in any meaningful Sense. Because to be a man of Truth or a person of Truth- you also need to have this kind of Love or in Reality- you really don't have Truth at all. If you *do not* Love; if you *cannot* Love; if you *cannot* Forgive; if you *cannot* hate Sin and yet love the person- if you *cannot* show Mercy to people who are struggling- then in Reality you are deceived; and you really don't have Truth either.

Truth will *compel* you to Love; and Love will *compel* you to hate all Lies and all Falsehoods and all Deception and all false Teaching. And so, if you have Truth- you will love; and if you love in a biblical Sense and not in a worldly Sense- then the main thing you love is Divine Truth.

Let me see if I can't illustrate that for you with a Passage from the Apostle Paul over in **Ephesians 4**. The 4th Chapter of **Ephesians** gives to us a magnificent Insight into God's Design for the Church- both as to its Ministry and its Goal.

The Ministry of the Church begins because in verse 11 of Ephesians 4- so let's begin to read there- **Ephesians 4:11-16**:

11 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,
12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;
13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.
14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;
15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,
16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

Now I was taught when I was first saved that **Ephesians 4:11** talks about what they called, the "*Five-fold Ministry*". But in Reality- the Way that the Greek grammar works here in this Passage shows us that at best- this is actually talking

about a “*Four-fold Ministry*” because the last two Ministries of “Pastors/Teachers” are actually one and the same Ministry and should not be divided.

So, the Lord has been so very gracious to give to the Church the Ministry Gifts of NT Apostles and OT Prophets who together- these two Ministries- received and formulated and wrote down the Divine Revelation of God that are found in the 66 Books of the Holy Bible. And then the Lord- in His great Mercy- has given the Church two other Ministries that go about to proclaim and teach and explain the Revelation that was received by the OT Prophets and the NT Apostles- which are the Evangelists and the Pastor/Teacher who proclaims and teach and explains this Divine Revelation both to the lost peoples of the world as well as to the saved- who are in the Church.

So, the Lord gives gifted men to His Church- gifted men that He has redeemed. And these are the men who have Leadership Roles in the Church. And their Responsibility is spelled out for us in verse 12 that says:

for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

So, the Lord gives to the Church gifted Leaders- for the Purpose of equipping the believing Saints- to the End Result that this Ministry builds up the Body of Jesus Christ- in the very *same* Christian Faith that was “**once for all handed down to the Saints**” (**Jude 3**). So, this is Edification as well as Sanctification. This is the maturing Process and this is spiritual Growth.

So, without me taking all that language apart totally- let me just say, the point is this- the Lord has given to the Church Apostles and Prophets and Evangelists and teaching Pastors for the Purpose of building up the Saints- with the Goal that their Edification or their Maturing brings them to the Measure of the Stature which belongs to the Fullness of Jesus Christ.

And the Apostle John was just such a Minister. John- through his Gospel Record; his three Epistles; and his Vision of the victorious Jesus in the Last Days- *teaches* us; and *instructs* us; and *guides* us; and holds forth an *infallible* Standard; and a perfect Mixture of both Truth and Love- so that we may see Jesus in all His Glory and be changed by that.

So, the Goal of all Sanctification; the Goal of all Ministry; the Goal of the Church; the Goal of all spiritual Growth then is Christ's Likeness- not so you can be Great in the earth- so you can demand Attention. And not so you can fulfill all your Dreams. No, the Goal is to be just like Jesus- not in Deity- but in Humility; and in Trust; and in Forgiveness; and in Power over Sin; and in Mercy; and in Faith; to believe that God's Word is true!

And that is what John did *for* the Church! That is how God *used* John! And that is how God is *still* using John- through all that he wrote under the ‘moving’ of God the Holy Spirit!

Amen. Let’s pray.

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