# December 29 Lesson 5 (NIV)

# DAVID'S PRAYER

**DEVOTIONAL READING:** Psalm 89:19–37 **BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE:** 2 Samuel 7:17–25;

1 Chronicles 17:16-27

# 1 CHRONICLES 17:16-27

<sup>16</sup>Then King David went in and sat before the LORD, and he said:

"Who am I, LORD God, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? <sup>17</sup> And as if this were not enough in your sight, my God, you have spoken about the future of the house of your servant. You, LORD God, have looked on me as though I were the most exalted of men.

- <sup>18</sup> "What more can David say to you for honoring your servant? For you know your servant, <sup>19</sup> LORD. For the sake of your servant and according to your will, you have done this great thing and made known all these great promises.
- <sup>20</sup> "There is no one like you, LORD, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears. <sup>21</sup> And who is like your people Israel—the one nation on earth whose God went out to redeem a people for himself, and to make a name for yourself, and to per-

form great and awesome wonders by driving out nations from before your people, whom you redeemed from Egypt? <sup>22</sup>You made your people Israel your very own forever, and you, LORD, have become their God.

- <sup>23</sup> "And now, LORD, let the promise you have made concerning your servant and his house be established forever. Do as you promised, <sup>24</sup> so that it will be established and that your name will be great forever. Then people will say, 'The LORD Almighty, the God over Israel, is Israel's God!' And the house of your servant David will be established before you.
- <sup>25</sup> "You, my God, have revealed to your servant that you will build a house for him. So your servant has found courage to pray to you. <sup>26</sup> You, LORD, are God! You have promised these good things to your servant. <sup>27</sup> Now you have been pleased to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue forever in your sight; for you, LORD, have blessed it, and it will be blessed forever."

#### **KEY VERSE**

There is no one like you, LORD, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears.—1 Chronicles 17:20

### Honoring God

### **Unit 1: David Honors God**

LESSONS 1-5

#### **LESSON AIMS**

After participating in this lesson, each learner will be able to:

- 1. Summarize the content of David's prayer.
- 2. Explain the importance of David's prayer in its historical context.
- 3. Recall prayers he or she prayed silently in class and offer them anew to the Lord daily throughout the week.

#### LESSON OUTLINE

#### Introduction

- A. Time-Out
- B. Lesson Context
- I. Past Blessings (1 CHRONICLES 17:16–22)
  - A. David's Smallness (vv. 16–18)
  - B. God's Greatness (vv. 19, 20)
  - C. Israel's Uniqueness (vv. 21, 22)

    No Place Like It
- II. Future Blessings (1 CHRONICLES 17:23–27)
  - A. For His Glory (vv. 23, 24)

    Antiestablishment?
  - B. For His Servant (vv. 25–27)

#### Conclusion

A. Upward and Inward

- B. Prayer
- C. Thought to Remember

#### **HOW TO SAY IT**

Molossia Moe-lahs-ee-yah.

Pharaoh Fair-o or Fay-roe.

Sinai Sigh-nye or Sigh-nay-

eye.

Yahweh

(Hebrew) Yah-weh.

# Introduction

#### A. Time-Out

Many parents use the time-out method of discipline when their children misbehave. If a child has crossed the line in some way, he or she must go to a designated place for time-out. In some cases, the child must go to his or her room, and certain privileges are withheld. Some parents have the child sit in the corner of a room for a period of time, with no interaction with anyone. In either situation, the child is to think about what he or she has done and (perhaps) resolve it to avoid any future time-outs.

Time-outs can also be opportunities for children to calm down, whether or not misbehavior was a factor in their behavior. Walking away from an overly stimulating situation can allow children to return to interactions calmly. The time away may help them to deal with the situation more appropriately. A similar principle applies to any coach who takes a time-out to refocus the team at a critical juncture during a game.

In today's lesson, King David took a time-out from an overwhelming situation to sit before the Lord and talk about things. David's focus in this prayer is not repentance or a plea for help. Instead he praises God for the many good things the Lord has provided for him.

#### **B.** Lesson Context

Lesson 3 examined the special promise that God made to David in response to David's desire to build a house for God, one suitable for the ark of the covenant (1 Chronicles 17:11-14). Instead, the Lord announced his intention to build an eternal house, kingdom, and throne for David. That promise is fulfilled in the kingdom of Jesus, the son of David.

The prophet Nathan reported to David all the Lord's words concerning who would build a house for whom (1 Chronicles 17:15). That must have amazed David! We do not know how much time passed between Nathan's message and the prayer that David offered in response to the magnificent promise—today's text. Most likely it was not very long. The gratitude in David's heart for God's generosity had to be expressed; he could not keep it

to himself. A second record of this prayer is found in 2 Samuel 7:18–29. The similarities are striking; differences of note will be discussed in the commentary below.

What Do You Think?

How will you realign your priorities to be able to reserve time and space for rest and spiritual reflection?

Digging Deeper

What cultural trend or expectation will most work against your doing so? Why?

# I. Past Blessings

(1 CHRONICLES 17:16-22)

# A. David's Smallness (vv. 16-18)

# 16. Then King David went in and sat before the LORD, and he said: "Who am I, LORD God, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?

David sits awestruck at the message he has heard from Nathan. His seated posture may strike us today as casual. In his day, however, it is a posture of high respect for someone of greater honor. Likely David is sitting back on his heels, not on a plush throne or comfortable couch. King David knows that there is a much greater king to whom he must give allegiance (Psalm 5:2, 7, 8).

The prayer begins in great humility with words similar to David's reflections

in Psalm 8:4. David's question here is very personal because of the promise he has been given. He views himself as unworthy of such treatment. David's humble Who am I contrasts with the arrogance of the Pharaoh in Egypt, who asked of Moses in derision, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey him and let Israel go?" (Exodus 5:2). Pharaoh's mind-set could be that of any ruler who believes he or she is an authority above God and need not be concerned about what God expects of earthly rulers. Such arrogance leads only to destruction (12:29–33; 14:5–28).

David alludes to how far the Lord has brought him. He is the youngest son of a rural family (1 Samuel 16:11–13). The Lord had previously mentioned David's humble beginnings as a shepherd (1 Chronicles 17:7). David went from literally tending the sheep to becoming the shepherd of God's covenant people (Psalm 78:70–72).

17. "And as if this were not enough in your sight, my God, you have spoken about the future of the house of your servant. You, LORD God, have looked on me as though I were the most exalted of men.

David knows that what *God* has done for him to this point is already significant—and yet there is more to come. He now reflects on what the *Lord* has planned. The Lord has told David of his intentions for the future, which

include a kingdom and a throne with no end (2 Samuel 7:12, 13). Such treatment befits someone exalted—someone worthier, more honorable and impressive than a lowly former shepherd such as David.

David refers to himself as God's servant 10 times throughout this prayer. This repetition emphasizes his humility, especially when considering the amazing promise God has made. Referring to God as Lord at the same time positions David as a person who works on God's orders, not by his own authority. The repetition also contrasts David's status, high by human standards, with God's status, compared to whom no human has high status. David may be king of Israel, but he embraces his status as a mere servant of Israel's ultimate king.

#### What Do You Think?

What steps can Christians take to ensure that prayers are offered in a spirit of humility and patience?

#### Digging Deeper

Which of the following passages will help you most in this regard: 1 Samuel 2:1–10; 1 Kings 8:22–30; Psalm 51; Acts 4:23–30? Why?

# 18. "What more can David say to you for honoring your servant? For you know your servant,

At this point, David appears to be out

of words to express his gratitude to the Lord. He acknowledges that the Lord knows him, a truth on which David elaborates in song, writing, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain" (Psalm 139:6).

# B. God's Greatness (vv. 19, 20)

# 19. "LORD. For the sake of your servant and according to your will, you have done this great thing and made known all these great promises.

David confesses the dual reasons for the Lord's generous dealings with him. Because of his love for David, God has chosen to bless David in this extraordinary, far-reaching manner (2 Samuel 7:16, 25; Isaiah 9:7; 37:35; 55:3). God has also demonstrated his greatness to David in keeping with God's own will. God takes great pleasure in doing great things and in making great promises to his faithful servants—to those who, like David, desire to honor him with their daily lives and their future plans (2 Chronicles 16:9).

What Do You Think?

What guardrails can we erect to ensure we remain humble when God blesses us?

Digging Deeper

In that regard, which of the following texts do you find most beneficial personally: Daniel 4:28–33; Acts 12:21–23; Philippians 2:1–11;

#### James 4:13-17?

# 20. "There is no one like you, LORD, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears.

David acknowledges that the *Lord* is unique (compare Isaiah 44:6; 46:9). Indeed, not only is there no other god like Yahweh, he is the only *God*. This is a clear statement of the singular nature of God, one of the central tenets of biblical theology (Deuteronomy 4:35; 1 Samuel 2:2; Psalm 18:31; Isaiah 44:6; Mark 12:29b).

David's many conquests to this point have brought him and Israel into contact with other people groups and nations who worship and serve fictitious gods (1 Chronicles 11:4-25; 14:8-17). These peoples, who have seen the Lord work on behalf of David and Israel, have had to acknowledge that their own gods are weak and powerless compared to Israel's God (compare Moses' experiences in Exodus 8:10; 9:14; 15:11). God's working on behalf of Israel has led their ears to ring with testimonies about how special the Lord really is.

This verse reflects on a fundamental understanding of who God is. Today we live in a world saturated with pluralism—the idea that one belief system is as good as any other. No religion has the right to claim to possess the truth or claim that its god is the only god. David

or claim that its god is the only god. David disagrees. The Lord God who has revealed himself in the Bible as the one who creates (Genesis 1:1), sustains (Acts 17:28), redeems (Isaiah 47:4), and shepherds (Psalm 23) is indeed the only God.

It is good for us to include such an acknowledgment whenever we pray. Then we are better able to reject the barrage of pluralistic thinking that confronts us daily.

# C. Israel's Uniqueness (vv. 21, 22)

21. "And who is like your people Israel—the one nation on earth whose God went out to redeem a people for himself, and to make a name for yourself, and to perform great and awesome wonders by driving out nations from before your people, whom you redeemed from Egypt?

God has chosen to express his power and uniqueness through his covenant with the nation of Israel. Just as there is no God like the Lord, there is no nation like his people Israel.

Much of what makes God unique is his holiness. Because of the nation's relationship with God, Israel could also rightly be called holy in the sense of being special and set apart from the nations. God blessed the Israelites by redeeming them from bondage in Egypt (Exodus 6:6) and then by driving out the

nations that were residing in the promised land (Joshua 1:11). In so doing, God magnified his own name. Just as the Lord was able to take David from being a humble shepherd to being king of Israel, so he was able to take Israel from being of inferior status among the nations to make it a nation of his covenant people (Deuteronomy 7:7, 8; 9:1).

That the Lord's name is great and awesome is recognized by the nations that God defeated on behalf of Israel (Psalm 102:12–17). It was his reputation (which is what name refers to) that caused the residents of Jericho to fear Israel (Joshua 2:9–11).

#### What Do You Think?

What can you do to strengthen your witness in terms of recalling God's past actions?

#### Digging Deeper

When witnessing to unbelievers, in what ways can we use such appeals without reference to the Bible (compare Acts 17:22–31)?

#### No PLACE LIKE IT

The Republic of Molossia began as a joke. Ruled by self-proclaimed benevolent dictator Kevin Baugh, Molossia (population: 6) is located primarily on Baugh's front yard and backyard in Nevada. The currency of Molossia is the valora; its

value is tied to the cost of a tube of chocolate chip cookie dough. Molossia remains at war with East Germany (which no longer exists) and enforces bans on guns, walruses, catfish, onions, and anything from Texas except pop star Kelly Clarkson. Truly, there is no nation like the Republic of Molossia!

King David announced with all certainty that no nation was like Israel. Israel was ruled by God, not by a self-proclaimed dictator. Israel was not at war with a nonexistent country but had been freed from a world power (Egypt). Israel was a land of milk and honey, not cookie dough! Baugh may pretend to be a sovereign ruler, but God's people need not pretend. We are ruled by the almighty God. There is no one like him!

—J. E.

# 22. "You made your people Israel your very own forever, and you, LORD, have become their God."

No other nation has received "most favored nation" status as *Israel* has. *God* bestowed that honor (accompanied by responsibilities) when he established his covenant with the nation at Mount Sinai and designated them as his "treasured possession" from "out of all nations" (Exodus 19:5).

# **II. Future Blessings**

(1 CHRONICLES 17:23-27)

# A. For His Glory (vv. 23, 24)

23. "And now, LORD, let the promise you have made concerning your servant and his house be established forever. Do as you promised,

Having recounted the Lord's faithfulness to both him and to the nation of Israel, David now asks the *Lord* to establish that same faithfulness to him by bringing to pass all that the Lord has promised to David and his house (compare 1 Kings 8:22–26).

24. "so that it will be established and that your name will be great forever. Then people will say, 'The LORD Almighty, the God over Israel, is Israel's God!' And the house of your servant David will be established before you.

David desires that God keep his word. This hope is not solely so that David may benefit and receive all the good things God has promised. David also wants the Lord's reputation as a faithful, covenant-keeping God to receive additional acclaim. This concern for God's name to be great forever offers great insight into what makes David a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22).

David also desires that *Israel* be recognized as the people whom God has singularly blessed. The continuation of his

house, especially on the throne in Jerusalem, depends on Israel continuing as a nation. Of course, in Jesus we know that Israel did not have to continue to exist as a political entity for God to keep his promises. Christians today form the spiritual Israel over which Jesus reigns eternally (Romans 9:6–29; 1 Peter 2:9, 10, 25).

#### **ANTIESTABLISHMENT?**

Antiestablishment became a buzzword of the 1960s. Young people saw many wrongs perpetuated by society and began to question "The Establishment," the adults of the day. Ironically, the antiestablishment merely created an establishment of its own. T-shirts and jeans became the new establishment's uniform in opposition to the suits and ties of their parents. The evening martini was replaced by a joint, and ballroom dancing was rejected in favor of freestyle frolicking. And for all the passionate jargon, world problems remained unsolved. The generation promising to fix world problems is now being blamed by the younger generation for causing them!

David recognized that the solution to Israel's problems was not to make a new establishment but to submit to what God established. The throne of David was established by God to last forever. That true establishment still exists, ruled by the eternal son of David—Jesus. What is your role in spreading the establishment of God's kingdom?

—J. E.

# B. For His Servant (vv. 25-27)

25. "You, my God, have revealed to your servant that you will build a house for him. So your servant has found courage to pray to you.

David's prayer has been grounded in the solemn promise the Lord made to build a house for him. Based on that sure word of the Lord, David has been stirred in his inner being to come to the Lord in prayer. It may be that, like David, our most fervent words spoken to God in prayer will come when they are based on the words he has spoken to us.

#### What Do You Think?

What are some appropriate ways to respond to fellow believers who claim that God told them to take or not take certain actions?

#### Digging Deeper

How would you further respond if the other believer quoted 1 Corinthians 2:14 to rebuff your reply?

Many outstanding books on prayer have been written over the years, but the Bible remains the best guide to prayer that one can use, in part thanks to David himself. One need only search the psalms to find David's prayers, available for the edification of God's people throughout generations. God has promised to give us the confidence to come to him in prayer boldly (Hebrews 4:16). Daniel's awareness of the approaching end of the 70-year captivity of God's people (as foretold by the prophet Jeremiah) gave him the courage to pray and plead for God's mercy on his exiled people (Daniel 9:1-3).

# 26. "You, LORD, are God! You have promised these good things to your servant.

The root of the Hebrew word promised can also be translated "word" (1 Chronicles 10:13; 15:15; etc.). The Lord has always "worded" his good things to us in an abundance of promises. The strongest evidence of his goodness came when the Word became flesh and we could "read," not just the promise but the promise maker, on a deeply personal level (John 1:1, 14).

Grace was just as amazing to David in the Old Testament as it is for us under the new covenant. Any Christian might voice a similar prayer when he or she considers how abundant the Lord's goodness has been. We too have been given royal treatment, though our lives are riddled with sin and rebellion. God has lavished his mercy on us and made us his children. The apostle John says it well: "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!" (1 John 3:1).

27. "Now you have been pleased to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue forever in your sight; for you, LORD, have blessed it, and it will be blessed forever."

Once more we see David expressing his desire that the *Lord* experience pleasure by blessing David's *house*. The prayer has been devoted to glorifying God, not David. David's two main motivations are the nature of God's blessings (abundant and sure) and David's deep comprehension of his own status as a mere *servant* whom the Lord has looked on with favor.

Although David's heir Solomon will turn from the Lord later in his life, the Lord will tear the kingdom away from Solomon's son, not Solomon himself. The reason? "For the sake of David your father" (1 Kings 11:12). God will also promise not to remove the entire kingdom but will leave one tribe for Solomon's son "for the sake of David my servant" (11:13; see 11:32, 36). Even after the nation divides, the Lord continues to honor David's legacy of faithful service. God will delay his judgment of the kingdom and of Jerusalem "for the sake of his servant David" (2 Kings 8:19; see also 19:34; 20:6).

David likely could not have anticipated the *forever* nature of the fulfillment

of God's promises to him even as he trusted that they would be eternal (Psalms 16:11; 21:6). Lesson 3 noted that this fulfillment would come about through the great son of David, Jesus. He would establish the house, kingdom, and throne that God said would last forever (1 Chronicles 17:14). David's position may be likened to that of the Old Testament prophets who yearned to know more of how their prophecies would be fulfilled but which did not happen within their lifetimes (1 Peter 1:10–12; compare Hebrews 11).

David's prayer ends at this point. It is not hard to imagine that this devoted servant of the Lord remained seated for some time, simply reflecting on the mercies of God toward him and delighting in all that the Lord had promised.

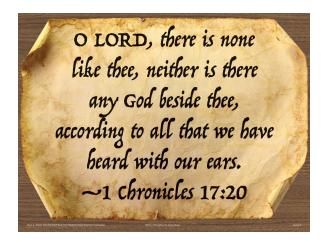
# Conclusion

### A. Upward and Inward

All of us would do well to incorporate time-outs into our daily routine as David did. These times will help us develop the sense of gratitude that fills David's prayer. David began his prayer astonished at what God has just promised to provide for him. That God had promised to bless not only David but also his future house was an awe-inspiring thought. We can be assured, as David was, that God is

sovereign in the present as proven by his past actions. He can take our lives and do great things with them, far beyond what we can imagine.

The other ingredient of prayer to be gleaned from our study deals with the matter of who we are. Today, many people revel in self-improvement, self-gratification, and self-fulfillment. The test of whether we are functioning at our highest levels is usually whether we are able to be independent. We expect to handle all sorts of problems—at home, at work, at church—on our own. When we begin to break down and think we might need help, we buy self-help books and resources. Such so-called solutions really mask the genuine root cause of humanity's problems. Any solution that leaves God the Creator out of the equation is doomed to failure. In the spiritual realm, the measure of our maturity is not our independence but our dependence on the Lord. If any of us asks the question, "Who am I?", the answer should be clear: "I am a servant of the Lord."



Visual for Lesson 5. Have the students pray this verse silently to themselves for one minute before closing the class with prayer.

David found it difficult to come up with words to express his wonder at all that the Lord had promised to do for him. At times, we as followers of Jesus must also confess to being unable to express our gratitude for all we have been given because of his grace. What more can we say? Let our lives each day reflect our conviction that the God to whom David prayed and whom he served is our God. May such sacred times of prayer be part of our walk with the Lord as well.

# **B.** Prayer

Father, stir us to give prayer the priority it must have in these perilous times. May we pray and live as people who know the truth that there is no other God but you. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

### C. Thought to Remember

The most important time of any day is spent with God.

# **INVOLVEMENT LEARNING**

Enhance your lesson with NIV Bible
Student (from your curriculum supplier)
and the reproducible activity page (at
www.standardlesson.com or in the back of
the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary
Deluxe Edition).

#### Into the Lesson

Before class, write familiar "best" or "of the year" honors on several index cards, one per card (examples: best dentist, grandparent of the year, top salesperson, spelling bee champion). Begin class by asking volunteers to draw cards and give an off-the-cuff acceptance speech for that award.

Alternative. Distribute copies of the "Exceptional Acceptance" exercise from the activity page, which you can download. Have class members work in pairs to discuss as indicated.

After either activity, discuss what makes a good acceptance speech. Lead into Bible study by saying, "When a person receives an honor, he or she may respond with gracious words. We can learn from David in this regard."

#### Into the Word

Divide the class into three groups. Give each group one of the following assignments on handouts (you prepare).

Humility Group: Read 1 Chronicles 17:16–19. 1—What was David's background (see also 1 Samuel 16:1–13)? 2—What merit did God see in David (see also Acts 13:22)?

**Gratitude Group**: Read 1 Chronicles 17:20–22. 1—Why was David grateful for being part of Israel (see also Deuteronomy 4:33, 34)? 2—What was God's intention for the nation of Israel from the beginning (see also Genesis 18:18, 19)?

**Hope Group**: Read 1 Chronicles 17:23-27. 1—What was the nature of the promise to David's descendants (see also Jeremiah 22:2-5)? 2—How was that promise fulfilled (compare Luke 1:29-33; Acts 13:32-35)?

After discussion winds down, have learners share their findings. Their results should be similar to these: Humility Group—David was not from Saul's royal line, but was the youngest son of a family of shepherds. God favored David, not because of his size or skill, but because David shared God's heart. Gratitude Group—Israel was unique. God chose and protected a people to be the nation through which to reveal himself and his plan. Israel's origins are traced back to Abraham. The nation was to usher in the promised Messiah. Hope

**Group**—Not every king in David's line obeyed God, and the nation suffered as a result. But the promise was never nullified. Jesus reigns eternally as David's descendant today.

Alternative. Distribute copies of the "How to Give an Acceptance Speech" exercise from the activity page. Have learners work in small groups to complete it. After either activity, lead into the final section of the lesson by saying, "David's prayer in this text provides us a good model for our own prayer lives. Let's see how we can apply what it teaches us."

#### Into Life

Close class by leading participants in a guided-prayer activity. Speak the words in italics, pausing as indicated for class members to respond with their own silent prayers.

Our God and Father of our Lord Jesus, we come to you in humility. We now confess reasons to you why we are unworthy of all you give us.

[Allow time for silent prayers in that regard.]

Nevertheless, you have promised that we are a royal priesthood and a holy nation according to 1 Peter 2:9. We ask that you help us be worthy of that calling this week as we seek to represent you in the following places.

[Allow time for silent prayers in that regard.]

We also come to you in gratitude for the people who minister to us in your name.

[Allow time for silent prayers in that regard.]

Finally, we come to you in hope, asking you to help us establish your throne in the hearts of those who do not yet know you.

[Allow time for silent prayers in that regard.]

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

To print the reproducible activity page, simply click the highlighted text below to create a pdf file on your hard drive. Then open the pdf file in Acrobat Reader and print.

Activity Page (December 29—David's Prayer)

#### DAVID'S PRAYER

Lesson 5, 1 Chronicles 17:16-27, NIV

#### **EXCEPTIONAL ACCEPTANCE**

Here are a few lines from famous Oscar acceptance speeches. Choose your favorite, then tell your neighbor why you like it more than the others.

"This moment is so much bigger than me." -Halle Berry

"I want to thank everyone I've ever met in my entire life." —Julia Roberts

"And I am standing here because the woman I share my life with has taught me and demonstrates for me every day just what love is." —Tom Hanks

"And most of all, I want to thank my father . . . the man who, when I said I wanted to be an actor, said, "Wonderful, just have a backup profession like welding." —Robin Williams

"I can't deny the fact that you like me, right now, you like me!"" —Sally Field

"It's my privilege. Thank you." [his entire speech] —Joe Pesci

[addressed to his statuette on receiving his first Oscar after decades of acting] "You're only two years older than me, darling. Where have you been all my life?" —Christopher Plummer

#### HOW TO GIVE AN ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

When people accept an award, their speeches include certain elements. Nathan reported the content of his revelation to David, detailing God's plan for David's family. David's prayer in response is like an acceptance speech. Summarize each portion of the lesson text in a sentence or two that reflects these key elements of acceptance speeches.

Show humility (1 Chronicles 17:16-19)

Recognize your peers (1 Chronicles 17:20-22)

Look to the future (1 Chronicles 17:23-27)

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