

## What Does The Bible Say About Angels?

**July 3, 2022**

Good morning CrossWinds! If you are a visitor, my name is Kurt. I am one of the pastors. This morning, we continue our summer series on the hot topics you requested. Today we are looking at what the Bible says about angels.

When it comes to baseball, I have always enjoyed the Los Angeles Angels. Unfortunately, they are not doing well. The last time they won a World Series was 20 years ago. They need a little help. In the movies, they were given that help. In the movie Angels in the Outfield, the Los Angeles Angels had the help of actual angels. The angels helped them catch balls, pitch strikes, and hit home runs. Behind that movie are some serious questions. What are angels like? Does God ever send them to help us? This morning, using the Bible as our guide, we are going to find those answers.

Our study is broken into two big pieces. We will begin by looking at basic information on angels. We want to know what the Bible says is the truth about angels, not just what the movies taught us about angels. In the second part of our study, we will see how what we learned about angels applies to daily life.

Let's begin with a definition of angels.

Angels are created spiritual beings with moral judgment and high intelligence but without physical bodies.

Like us, angels were created. As we learned last week, all angels were created sometime in the creation week. No angels were created since the creation week. Since angels cannot die (Luke 20:36), the same number of angels has continued to exist since the creation week.

Like us, they are moral beings knowing the difference between right and wrong. Like us, they are highly intelligent. Unlike us, they do not have bodies.

### **What work do angels accomplish?**

This list is not exhaustive but it will give us an idea of the way God uses angels in the world.

#### **Angels bring messages from God to people.**

An angel told Mary about the birth of Jesus and that the child in her womb was conceived by the Holy Spirit and was the Son of God. Another angel was around at Jesus' resurrection. He spoke to a different Mary to explain why the tomb was empty.

But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen..." Matthew 28:5-6a (ESV)

The word angel in Hebrew literally means messenger. Bringing messages from God to man is one of the primary ways God has used angels in history. Angels were even involved in giving God's law to Moses on Mount Sinai.

...you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it. Acts 7:53 (ESV)

Many times, when God wanted to communicate to people in history, he did it through an angel.

#### **Angels praise God.**

"Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created." Revelation 4:11 (ESV)

This passage from Revelation describes what the angels say to God around the his throne as they continually worship him. It is a common belief that

angels sing around God's throne in heaven. They may do that. The text tells us they say these words, not *sing* these words. There is no Bible text that tells us about angel singing words of praise to God. We know for certain they speak words of praise to God. I am not saying angels cannot sing. I just want to point out we have no record of angels singing.

### **Angels protect and serve us.**

For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.  
Psalm 91:11 (ESV)

Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation? Hebrews 1:14 (ESV)

God sends his angels to guard us and serve us. When we hear of someone whose business it is to protect and serve, we think of a policeman's motto. It is also the angels' motto. The Bible is clear that God sends his angels to serve and protect us; that is especially true of Christians.

Have you driven on a road late at night struggling to stay awake? Have you had the experience of a bump in the road awakening you and bringing you to your senses right before you drove off the road? That bump in the road may have been a bump in the road. It could also have been an angel striking your car to wake you up before you ended up in a wreck.

Angels don't just protect people by involving themselves in people's lives physically. They can also involve themselves in people's dreams to warn them. We see that with Joseph, the earthly adoptive father of Jesus.

Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." Matthew 2:13 (ESV)

### Angels execute God's judgment.

Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and breathed his last. Acts 12:23 (ESV)

In this passage, King Herod was completely full of himself. He thought he was a god. The real God of the universe decided to put a stop to his ego problem and sent an angel to strike him down. It is interesting to see the way he died. He was eaten by worms. His death certificate said he was eaten by worms, but the Bible tells us he died because God sent an angel to strike him dead.

Angels are capable of executing God's judgment on more than one person at a time. They are very effective at carrying out God's judgment because they are extremely powerful.

And that night the angel of the Lord went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. 2 Kings 19:35 (ESV)

### Angels battle demonic forces.

The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia... Daniel 10:13 (ESV)

Here we see one angel was held up in his God-given task of bringing a message to Daniel because he was in a battle with demons known as the princes of the kingdom of Persia. Apparently, those demons were assigned by Satan over the Persian kingdom. There were formidable adversaries for the messenger angel. God's messenger angel had to wait for angelic reinforcements to arrive before he could make his way to Daniel. This verse gives a little window into the unseen battle between angels and demons in this world.

### Angels celebrate when sinners repent.

Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents. Luke 15:10 (ESV)

When those living in sin repent of their sin and seek the forgiveness of Jesus, the angels throw a party in heaven. Repentance and trust in Jesus really get the angels excited. As a church, we are about reaching people with Jesus. We are about telling people the good news of Jesus and urging people to repent of their sins and trust in Jesus to forgive their sins. We want to give angels reasons to party. Just as angels celebrate when people trust in Jesus, we want to celebrate too.

### Angels carry us home to heaven when we die.

This is probably new for many of us. The concept of an angelic escort home to heaven at the time of one's death was a common belief in Jewish literature at the time of Jesus. In Luke 16, Jesus told a parable about a rich man and a poor man named Lazarus. He talked about what happened to them when they died. In that parable, Jesus talked about angels escorting Lazarus to Abraham's side after his death. If an angelic escort bringing us home to heaven was a false belief, this parable would have been Jesus' opportunity to correct things. Instead of correcting the belief in an angelic escort that brings us home to heaven, he reinforced this belief.

The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried... Luke 16:22 (ESV)

We also see in 2 Kings 2:11 that Elijah was given an angelic escort in chariots of fire bringing him home to heaven.

## What are some of the different kinds of angels?

When it comes to angels, Hollywood has led us to believe all angels look like a man wearing a white robe. He has two wings. Some angels may look like that but all angels do not look like that. When it comes to angels, one size does not fit all. They can be very different.

This is not a complete list of the different types of angels found in the Bible, but it will at least give us an idea of the different kinds of angels in the unseen universe.

### Cherubim

Cherubim are around God's throne in heaven. They are guardians of God's holiness. The cherubim were given the task of guarding the entrance to the Garden of Eden and the tree of life. They are super-powerful bodyguards. If God tasked them with not allowing anyone or anything access to the tree of life, you know they must be up to the task.

He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life. Genesis 3:24 (ESV)

Over the ark of the covenant in the Old Testament were two golden figures of cherubim with their wings stretched over the ark. God said he would dwell between the cherubim on the ark, just like he dwelled between the cherubim in heaven.

There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you about all that I will give you in commandment for the people of Israel. Exodus 25:22 (ESV)

Cherubim were also part of the decorations in Solomon's temple.

Last week, we learned that before Satan chose to sin, he was an anointed cherub whose purpose was to guard God's holiness. Since cherubim are so powerful, this explains the power of Satan in this world.

### Seraphim

While the cherubim are angelic bodyguards of God's holiness, the seraphim are powerful angelic worship leaders. They worship God. In Hebrew, their name means to burn. They are only mentioned in Isaiah 6:2-7. Their job is to continually worship God.

Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" Isaiah 6:2-3 (ESV)

### The Living Creatures

These angels are mentioned in Ezekiel and Revelation. There are only four of them. They represent parts of God's creation, and like the seraphim, they constantly worship God.

...And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like an eagle in flight. And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" Revelation 4:6-8 (ESV)

### Watchers

I saw in the visions of my head as I lay in bed, and behold, a watcher, a holy one, came down from heaven. Daniel 4:13 (ESV)

There are only three occurrences of the angels called watchers in the Bible. All of them are in the book of Daniel. I will let you guess what they do in this world. Yes, they watch what happens on earth and report it back to heaven. I

mention this type of angel because of you ever read intertestamental Jewish literature, such as the book of 1 Enoch or Jubilees, they mention this type of angel all the time. While 1 Enoch and other intertestamental books describe them extensively, I would be careful. Those books were never accepted by the church or recognized by God as part of the Bible. I think much of what we find in the intertestamental books is speculation.

### **Archangel**

This introduces us to the concept that there is rank and order among the angels. One of the top angels is Michael the archangel. He is the leader of the armies of heaven. Daniel 10:13 tells us he is one of the chief princes, which may mean there are other archangels out there. We don't know that. It is speculation.

Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. Revelation 12:7–8 (ESV)

### **What are common questions about angels?**

#### **Do we know the names of angels?**

Only two angels are identified by name in the Bible. One is Michael, who is the head of the angelic armies of heaven. The other is Gabriel. He seems to be assigned the task of delivering special messages from God to people. For example, he was sent with a message from God for Daniel in the Old Testament. He was sent to announce Jesus' impending birth to Mary in the New Testament. He also announced to Zechariah John the Baptist's birth. After that, we don't know the names of any angels.

If you look at intertestamental literature and apocryphal books of the Bible that the Catholic Church added to its version of the Bible in 1534, those books



name plenty of angels. Those books are all speculation and not inspired by the Holy Spirit. At the time of the early church, they were never recognized as authoritative books in our Bible.

### **Are angels limited by space and time?**

Even though angels are spiritual beings, they are limited by space and time. They can only be in one place at a time. They cannot sit in all seats of this building at once. They can only sit in one seat at a time. God can be everywhere because he is God. He is omnipresent. Angels, even though they are spiritual beings, are still bound by space and time. We know that because they need to travel to get to where they are going, just like you and me.

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth... Luke 1:26 (ESV)

### **How many angels are in existence?**

The Bible does not give us a specific number but it is apparently a very large number. Remember Luke 20:36 tells us angels do not die. All of them were created at once at the beginning of creation so the total number of angels has not increased since that time.

Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands... Revelation 5:11 (ESV)

When I was doing my research on angels, I ran across something I found completely hilarious. In the Middle Ages, a man named Albert the Great claimed he knew the number of angels. It was 399,920,004. I have no idea how he came up with that number. When we get to heaven, we will find out if he was right.

## Do we have guardian angels?

This is a great question. The answer to this question depends on what you mean by a guardian angel. Does God send his angels to protect us? He definitely does that. We just read that in Psalm 91:11 and Hebrews 1:14.

But does God assign a specific angel to guard a specific person for the totality of his or her life? Maybe and maybe not. The idea of a guardian angel is found in Matthew 18:10.

See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven. Matthew 18:10 (ESV)

Here we see these little children had a guardian angel assigned to them. Their guardian angels always had access to the face of God the Father in heaven. The problem is we do not know if that guardian angel was assigned to the child for life. We do not know that the angels assigned to them were only assigned to them when they were children and when they became adults, a different angel was assigned to them. We do not know if angels work eight-hour shifts. We do not know if angels take job transfers and guard different people at different times.

Another passage where we see a hint at the idea of a guardian angel is Acts 12:15.

They said to her, "You are out of your mind." But she kept insisting that it was so, and they kept saying, "It is his angel!" Acts 12:15 (ESV)

Here an angel let Peter out of prison. He went to the house of Mary where people were praying for him. When he showed up at the door, those who were

there thought it couldn't possibly be Peter at the door. They thought it was his angel, maybe his guardian angel.

There is a long tradition of Christian belief in guardian angels but there is nothing definitive in the Bible to prove one angel is assigned to one person for life.

### **Are angels more powerful than people?**

The Bible tells us all angels, not just the most powerful angels like cherubim, are very powerful.

Bless the LORD, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, obeying the voice of his word! Psalm 103:20 (ESV)

When God puts on your resume the term *mighty ones*, that means you are powerful. There is also Scripture that clearly tells us angels are more powerful than people.

...whereas angels, though greater in might and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord. 2 Peter 2:11 (ESV)

Angels are definitely greater in might and power than we are.

Here is what is amazing. Right now, we are lower than the angels. We are less powerful than the angels. It will not always be that way. When Jesus returns and we receive a much fuller installment of our salvation, we will not just receive our resurrection bodies but we will go from being below the angels to above the angels. We will become the most blessed beings in the universe because of what Jesus has done for us! We will eventually participate in judging the angels because we will be above the angels.

Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life! 1 Corinthians 6:3 (ESV)

So while angels are more powerful than people right now, when Jesus returns and we have a much fuller installment of the salvation that is ours, we will be over the angels and more powerful than the angels.

### Who is the angel of the Lord?

In the Old Testament, we see a special angel called “the angel of the Lord.” This is not “an angel of the Lord” but “the angel of the Lord.” When we look at this angel, we find this angel is different from other angels. This angel alone possesses all the character qualities of God. This angel is identified as God. In the Old Testament, this angel had a special focus on saving and protecting God’s people. As soon as we get to the New Testament, “the angel of the Lord” disappears. Who do you think “the angel of the Lord” is in the Old Testament?

It is Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity. Jesus showed up before he had a body to save and protect God’s people in the Old Testament. The second person of the Trinity took on a body in the New Testament so he could save and protect God’s people in a much greater way. Let me show you a few verses so you can see that the angel of the Lord is God.

But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.” Genesis 22:11–12 (ESV)

And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush... And he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. Exodus 3:6 (ESV)

### What about angels show us God's love for us?

This brings us to the second part of our study. We have learned what angels do in this world. We learned a little bit about the different types of angelic

beings in this world. We answered a few common questions about angels. Let's see how what we learned can apply to our lives.

One of the most practical applications is a study of angels shows us how much God loves us.

**We are created in God's image. Angels are not.**

Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, **for God made man in his own image.** Genesis 9:6 (ESV)

The reason human life is sacred is because of all the animals on the planet, only human beings are created in the image of God. Years ago I went hunting for the first time in Michigan. People told me it would be hard to pull the trigger and shoot a deer. To be honest, it wasn't that hard. I kept reminding myself of my theology. After the flood, God gave the animals to Noah for food. God was OK with me shooting and eating a deer. God is OK with me eating meat. I don't need to be a vegetarian. Shooting a human being is completely different. Humans are not just another type of animal. We are created in God's likeness. I am not going to explain all the ways being created in the image of God makes us different. I simply want to point out that of all the animals on the planet, we are more like God than anything else. I also want us to notice that the angels, even the mightiest angels, are not created in God's image. That means we are more like God than any of the angels. That shows us how much more God loves us than he loves the angels.

Remember that in this universe, God doesn't send us to protect and serve the angels because they are so important. He sends the angels to protect and serve us because we are so important.

Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation? Hebrews 1:14 (ESV)

In the entire universe, only we are created in the image of God.

**Angels cannot bear children.**

For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. Matthew 22:30 (ESV)

Angels cannot have children. One of the greatest blessings in life is having a family and children. Holidays, like July 4, are much better with family. If you have children, isn't it a privilege to raise them and to spend a holiday with them? God did not give angels that privilege. God gave us the privilege of marriage, intimacy, children, and family. The angels do not enjoy this. This shows us we may not be as mighty as the angel but God has blessed us beyond the angels.

**No angel will be saved.**

For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Hebrews 2:16 (ESV)

God created two groups of intelligent, moral creatures --- human beings and angelic beings. Among the angels, many sinned, and as we learned last week, probably a third of the angels fell into sin. God decided to save none of them. Since angels cannot die, he needed to do something with them. God created the lake of fire as the just final resting place for the devil and his angels. This was perfectly just for God to do. No angel that rebelled can ever complain that God isn't treating it fairly when he will put it in the lake of fire for all eternity. The angels that rebelled deserve the lake of fire.

The other group of morally intelligent creatures is us. All of us have sinned and turned away from God. This began with Adam but each one of us proved our

sin by continuing to sin. God could have, and justly should have, let us go on our way to eternal condemnation. God didn't do that. At immense personal cost, God's own son took on flesh to save us. Jesus died one of the most brutal deaths on a cross, dying in our places for our sin. While hanging on that cross, God the Father poured out the eternity of wrath that we deserved for our own sin on his own son because God loved us and purposed to save us.

If God, out of his incredibly costly sacrifice for our sin, chose to save only five people out of the human race, that would have been amazing grace. If God had decided to save only a hundred people from the human race through Christ's incredible sacrifice, that would have been even more amazing grace on God's part. God has chosen to do much more than that. God chosen to redeem out of sinful humanity a great multitude that is more than we can count.

And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation..." Revelation 5:9 (ESV)

Isn't God incredibly good to us? Are you beginning to get an understanding how much God loves you? He loves you far more than the angels.

### **How are angels involved in daily our lives?**

#### **Angels are present in worship.**

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering... Hebrews 12:22 (ESV)

Although we do not ordinarily see or hear evidence of the angels worshipping God with us, it is encouraging to know that they worship with us. As we pray out loud and thank God for his goodness to us, angels are joining us and

giving hearty amens to our prayers. Angels love to worship God. They love to join us when we sing praise and worship God. They love to hear the preaching and teaching of God's Word. As we know worship of God is the right thing for us to do, angels also feel a rightness about worship because it is what they were created to do.

### **Angels watch our obedience and disobedience.**

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules... 1 Timothy 5:21 (ESV)

In 1 Timothy, Paul reminded Timothy that not just God and Jesus Christ were watching the way Timothy lived his life but the elect angels were also watching him. The elect angels is another way of saying the angels who were chosen by God to stay loyal at the time of the fall. They are watching our lives and how we live. Even if we think our sins are done in secret and the only person we grieve with our sin is ourselves, that is not true. The truth is that a hundred or more angels witness our disobedience and are grieved at our sin. On the other hand, when we do the right thing at great sacrifice and think nobody notices, there are probably a hundred angels watching our obedience to God's Word. What we can't see is they are celebrating, cheering, and giving one another high-fives for our obedience to God.

The Newsboys had a song about this that came out in 1998. It is called "Entertaining Angels." Some of the words are, "I am entertaining angels by the light of my TV screen." As we stay up late at night watching television, the angels of heaven are sitting with us on the couch watching what we watch. They are



seeing what is put on the screens of our phones and are either filled with joy or grief depending on how we live.

### **Angels may take on human form to visit us.**

The author of Hebrews reminds us that angels can sometimes take on human form to make inspection visits. They are a little like a restaurant critic who disguises himself and then visits a new restaurant in order to write about the food.

**Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Hebrews 13:2 (ESV)**

This should make us eager to help people in need that we come across in our lives. The person in need that we meet on the street and we end up purchasing a meal for them from McDonald's may be a poor person. It also could have been an angel paying an inspection visit to see what we would do. The old lady in front of us at Hy-Vee who is struggling to pay for groceries may be an old lady. She may also be an angel in disguise waiting to see what we will do. That visitor at CrossWinds Church who looks a little lost and in need of a friend may not be a visitor. He may be an angel in disguise checking to see what we will do and how we will live.

### **Angels deliver us from danger.**

**My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me... Daniel 6:22 (ESV)**

**But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out... Acts 5:19–20 (ESV)**

A few years ago, when I was teaching about the way God uses angels to protect us in life, a woman came up to me after the sermon. At the time, her son

was serving as a marine in Afghanistan. That week, the truck her son was driving ran over an IUD buried in the road. Many in the truck were injured or killed. A small handful were left untouched by the shrapnel that ripped its way through the vehicle. How did the metal fragments somehow miss his body when he was in the way of the blast? His mother asked me if it could have been an angel that protected her son and deflected the shrapnel from his body. It might have been.

### **In what ways should we be cautious of angels?**

#### **Beware of false teaching that comes from angels.**

But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. Galatians 1:8 (ESV)

Before we leave the topic of angels, I should give you two quick cautions about angels. Paul warned us to not listen to anybody who teaches us a different gospel other than salvation by Jesus alone and by faith alone. Even if an angel from heaven teaches us something different, do not believe it. Stay away. The reason Paul said this is because he knew people are fascinated by angels. He knew Satan tries to masquerade as an angel of light for the purpose of leading people astray.

And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 2 Corinthians 11:14 (ESV)

Knowing that fallen angels will try to masquerade as angels of light to attempt to pull people away from Jesus should keep any Christian from being fooled by the Mormons. The Mormon religion is based on the teaching of an angel named Moroni who supposedly spoke to Joseph Smith and revealed to him the basis of the Mormon religion. In those teachings, Moroni says Jesus was

just a good moral teacher, that Jesus isn't that big of a deal. This is exactly what Paul warned us against in Galatians.

**Angels should not be worshipped or sought.**

Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind...  
Colossians 2:18 (ESV)

In the church of Colossae, people were being led away from Jesus into the worship of angels. People were praying to angels and were captivated by visions of angels. Whatever was happening with angels, people were distracted away from Jesus and were fixated on angels and worshipping angels.

Look what an angel said to the apostle John in Revelation about bowing down to angels.

Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God." Revelation 19:10 (ESV)

## **Conclusion**

In the movie Angels in the Outfield, angels were sent by God to help the Los Angeles Angels win baseball games. That was fantasy. It didn't really happen. The truth is that if you know Jesus Christ as your savior, God is sending angels to serve and protect you. The truth is also that God's plans for you through Jesus are better than anything an angel will experience. Right now, we are below the angels. One day, through Jesus, we will be above the angels and even participate in the judging of the angels. Jesus Christ chose to save us when we sinned. He didn't save a single angel when they sinned. Our study of angels has reminded us of how incredibly loved we are by God, loved far more than the angels.



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