

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS 4U



PART 1

BOOK OF PROVERBS 4 U

PREFACE



The thrice Holy God is Wisdom. In the reverent fear (awe) of the Lord God, only he who walks uprightly has knowledge of the Holy One, the way of wisdom and understanding. The Book of Proverbs is found in the Wisdom Writings of the Hebrew Scriptures, Old Testament part of the Bible. It is a valuable manual for Life, a practical guide to happy and successful living. Most of the proverbs were written in the 10th B.C. by Solomon, the King of Israel, son and chosen heir of King David. The proverbs give wise advice to all people; the scholar, the wise, the foolish and the young –

that people may know Wisdom.

Solomon ruled over a large and wealthy united Israel, the battles won by King David having secured peace with safe and extended boundaries. Gifted by the Lord, Solomon was a man of great learning and culture, being renowned for his unequalled wisdom (1Kings 4:29-34) and remembered in the well-known phrase –

the Wisdom of Solomon.

Because the preacher was wise, he (Solomon) taught the people knowledge; and he pondered and searched out and set in order many proverbs.

Ecclesiastes 12:9

Although Solomon probably wrote about three thousand proverbs only some 900 are recorded. There are over 30 quotes from Proverbs in the New Testament. The proverbs on how to act wisely and to do the right are based on the worshipful fear (awe) of the Lord God, with the aim to turn sinners from their evil ways. Many of the proverbs are maxims of comparison or contrast written in a concise style and expressed often in just one verse. Starting with a short Prologue, the book falls into several sections or parts –

Solomon's Proverbs; Thirty Sayings of the Wise and their additional Sayings; Solomon's Proverbs copied by the wise men of Hezekiah, King of Judah; the words of Agur; the proverbs of King Lemuel, who may have been a Gentile or Solomon himself. The book ends with an epilogue extolling the virtues of the ideal wife.

The Book of Proverbs, with its theme of Godly wisdom, should never be neglected being a valuable study in God-centred morality. The sayings are parables shedding light on the difference between right and wrong, wisdom and folly, truth and error. To cope with the varied gamut of life's problems, the contrasting actions of the righteous and the wicked, the wise and the foolish are described in many ways, even humorous. The consequences of such actions are often given in the same verse. Proverbs are an excellent teaching method, being easy to understand and remember. The Book of Proverbs should be included in the curriculum of every educational establishment. To ignore this book, an individual, a people, a nation do so at their peril.

This summary of Proverbs is suitable for personal study and for teenager or adult Bible Study groups. In each Study session it is advisable have a Christian group leader and a time for reading, questions with prayer and discussion of life's problems today, chapter by chapter. There are 2 booklets in the study – the Full and the Workbook versions; the latter with spaces provided for the scripture verses to be added. It is important for each group member to have a Workbook copy of the script in order to write the verses in the spaces provided.

The holy scriptures are written in *blue italics*.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of the Book of Proverbs is to teach godly wisdom, the Lord speaking through Solomon, king and prophet. Although written centuries ago, this Wisdom book gives detailed and excellent advice for both daily life and times of trouble such as war and contention. The proverbs often include various examples from the natural world. There are other collections of proverbs but the Hebrew collection is the largest.

Acts of folly or the word fool in Proverbs certainly do not refer to anyone with learning difficulties or handicap of any kind. People of high intelligence and given great opportunities in life can act foolishly. Even Solomon's great wisdom, humbly prayed for at the beginning of his reign (1 Kings 3:7-14), turned in his latter years to failure and folly. Man's wisdom does not attain the holy standard of God's wisdom as Solomon's proverbs clearly record.

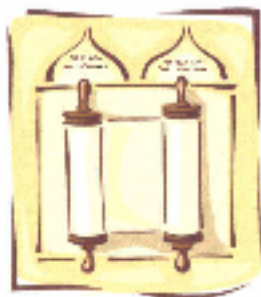
A man's mind plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps and makes them sure.
Proverbs 16:9

Many plans are in a man's mind, but it is the Lord's purpose for him that will stand.
Proverbs 19:21

Solomon's life enacts the Book of Proverbs. His reign turned from one of Wisdom to that of Folly. The King, having married many foreign women, became involved in their idol worship – an abomination to the Lord. Judgement followed and in the reign of Solomon's son, Israel was divided into two kingdoms and in time the people went into exile. Restored Israel today still awaits their Messiah, whereas Christians believe, Jesus has already come in His first Advent.

The book of Proverbs can be divided into 7 main sections -

- * PROLOGUE - Chapter 1:1-7 PREFACE - Chapters 1:8-9:18
- * VOLUME 1 SOLOMON'S PROVERBS Chapters 10-22
- * SAYINGS OF THE WISE Chapters 22:17-24:34
- * VOLUME 2 SOLOMON'S PROVERBS Chapters 25-29
 (COPIED BY THE MEN OF HEZEKIAH, KING OF JUDAH)
- * AGUR'S PROVERBS Chapter 30
- * KING LEMUEL'S PROVERBS Chapter 31
- * EPILOGUE - THE IDEAL WIFE Chapter 31:10-31





KING DAVID'S INSTRUCTIONS TO SOLOMON

Many of Solomon's proverbs are based upon the wise instructions of his father, David, to his sons. King David's words of wisdom were addressed mainly to Solomon. The words *My son* are repeated in other chapters and often in the first verses. David's wise words to his son(s) stressed the need for mercy and kindness and were not to be forgotten. Kindness and mercy were likened to a necklace gracing one's neck.

Do you think the Godly wisdom of older people is of value to the young in modern society today; or is such wisdom largely ignored?

My son, hear the instruction of your father; nor forsake the teaching of your mother.

Pr 1:8 (Pr 6:20 13:1)

They are a (victor's) chaplet (garland) of grace upon your head and chains for your neck.

Pr 1:9 (Pr 6:21)

Let not mercy and kindness and truth forsake you; bind them about you neck, write them upon the tablet of your heart.

Pr 3:3

When you go (the words of your parents' God) shall lead you; when you sleep, they shall keep you; and when you waken, they shall talk with you.

Pr 6:22

A fool despises his father's instruction, but he who regards reproof acquires prudence.

Pr 15: 5

A wise son makes a glad father, but a self-confident and foolish man despises his mother and puts her to shame.

Pr 15:20

He who does violence to his father and chases away his mother is a son who causes shame and brings reproach.

19:26

PROVERBS 4U

The Book of Proverbs in using language of comparison and contrast, similes and metaphors - the difference between good and evil, wisdom and folly, truth and error is clearly revealed. Although not a theological work, light is shed on these searching questions of all mankind.

In life's varied problems of indecision, fear, immorality, anger, violence, laziness, greed and drunkenness etc. tremendous guidance and advice are given.

Studying this Book, provides many lessons for us all to take to our hearts and inwardly digest. The proverbs give concise instructions and in chapters 10-29 the wise and foolish actions are often described in just one verse. Solomon's Proverbs have not been written in any order, so this large collection has been classified under the following Chapters.

PART 1

1..WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE

2 GOOD AND EVIL

PART 2

3 SEVEN THINGS GOD HATES

4 FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

5 FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS

6 RICHES AND POVERTY

PART 3

7 THE TONGUE

8 DECEIT AND HONESTY

9 TRUE AND FALSE WITNESSES

10 PLEDGES

11 LAZINESS

PART 4

12 SAYINGS OF THE WISE-

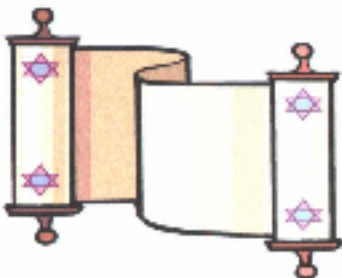
13 PROVERBS COPIED BY THE MEN OF HEZEKIAH

14 THE WORDS OF AGUR

15 THE WORDS OF KING LEMUEL

16 THE IDEAL WIFE

CONCLUSION



1. WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE

Wisdom is about being wise and becoming wiser and increasing in knowledge. A wise person has God-given understanding and discernment giving insight to see the truth about an individual, a problem or a situation. Wise people live righteous, prayerful lives, are cautious, observant, use common sense and act prudently without pride. Being tactful and diplomatic, they are good at personal relations and give wise counsel. The practical application of wisdom is its skill manifested in perception and discretion in daily living. *The fear* (awe - reverence - worship) *of the Lord* is the greatest wisdom – other sources are inadequate to some degree. Such Godly incorruptible wisdom yields clear vision with the ability to put good judgement into action. There are many more sayings in Proverbs in each chapter than can be included in this Study.

The reverent and the worshipful fear of the Lord is the beginning and the principal part of knowledge; but fools despise skilful and godly Wisdom, instruction and discipline.

Pr.1:7

The Lord gives skilful and godly Wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.

Pr 2:6

Discretion shall watch over you, understanding shall keep you.

Pr 2:11

Wisdom is often personified as God or the Speaker.

If you will repent and heed my reproof I (Wisdom) will pour my spirit upon you.

Pr 1:23

Whoso hearkens to me (Wisdom) shall dwell securely and in confident trust and be without fear or dread of evil.

Pr 1 33

Be not wise in your own eyes; reverently fear and worship the Lord and turn away from evil.



Pr 3:7

Wisdom's instruction is better than choice silver or refined gold, rubies or pearls. Wisdom and Folly are also used in the feminine gender

Happy is the man who finds skilful and godly Wisdom and the man who gets understanding. For the gaining of it is better than the gaining of silver and the profit of it better than fine gold. Skilful and godly Wisdom is more precious than rubies and nothing you can wish for is to be compared to her.

Pr 3:13-15

WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE - continued.

Wisdom's blessing of length of years is often repeated throughout the Book of Proverbs, as in the next two proverbs.

Length of days is in her right hand and in her left hand are riches and honour.

Pr 3:16

Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings, and the years of your life shall be many.

Pr 4:10

Prize Wisdom highly and exalt her, and she will exalt and promote you; she will bring you to honour when you embrace her.

Pr 4:8

Take firm hold of instruction, do not let go, for she is your life.

Pr 4:13 (4:22)

Say to skilful and godly Wisdom, You are my sister, and regard understanding or insight as your intimate friend.

Pr 7:4

The Book of Proverbs includes the following well-remembered verses –

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not rely on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths.

Pr 3:5-6



All who trust the Lord with their whole heart walk wisely for they obey His commandments and reverently and worshipfully fear Him. To trust in oneself and not God leads to folly in some way or other. Atheists, for example, do not fear God for they do not believe in Him and have no regard for the wisdom of His word. Such ways are contrary, devious and foolish for God and Wisdom are despised in unbelief. In God's sight unbelief is lawlessness, the sin of rebellion.

Such folly leads ultimately to anarchy and the break up of a nation – not only applicable to Israel. God's gracious word gives timely warnings and if heeded by true repentance these dire consequences are cancelled.

Deuteronomy Chapters 28, 30

THE CALL OF WISDOM

To you, O men, I call and my voice is directed to the sons of men.

Pr 8:4

For my mouth shall utter truth, and wrongdoing is detestable and loathsome to my lips.

Pr 8:7

By me kings reign and rulers decree justice.

Pr 8:15 (16)

I (Wisdom) walk in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of justice.

Pr 8:20

WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE - continued.

WISDOM IN CREATION

God is wise for - *The Lord by godly Wisdom has founded the earth; by understanding he has established the heavens.*

Pr. 3:19



Read Proverbs 8:22-31

A HYMN OF WISDOM IN CREATION

I (Wisdom) was ordained from everlasting, from the beginning, before ever the earth existed.

Pr 8:23

Then I (Wisdom) was beside Him as a master of the work; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing before Him always, Rejoicing in His habitable earth and delighting in the sons of men.

Pr 8: 30-31

In John's Gospel (John 1:1-3) Christ was present with God in the beginning of the Creation. In the Book of Genesis on the sixth day when God made all kinds of creatures –

God said Let Us (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) make mankind in Our image and after Our likeness.

Genesis 1:26

For whoever finds me (Wisdom) finds life and obtains favour of the Lord. But he who sins against me wrongs and injures himself; all who hate me love and court death.

Pr 8:35-36

Read Chapter 9

INVITATIONS TO THE HOUSES OF WISDOM AND FOLLY

The houses of Wisdom with its seven pillars and Folly are described. Archaeologists have discovered the existence of houses constructed with seven supporting pillars as in the days of Samson.

Judges 16:23-31

The following scripture is the key verse of Proverbs, Godly wisdom being the main theme throughout the entire book.

The fear (worship and awe) of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

Pr 9:10

He that winneth souls is wise.

Pr 11:30 AV.

The blessings of Wisdom are given and described as a banquet of life; but for those scorning Wisdom and entering the door of the foolish woman there is only the grave of the dead.

The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he who listens to counsel is wise.

Pr 12:15

WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE - continued.

Fools make a mock of sin and sin mocks the fool, but among the upright there is the favour of God.

Pr 14:9

He who has knowledge spares his words, and a man of understanding has a cool spirit.

Pr 17:27

The mind of the prudent is ever getting knowledge, and the ear of the wise is ever seeking knowledge.

Pr 18:15

Counsel in the heart of man is like water in a deep well, but a man of understanding draws it out.

Pr 20:5

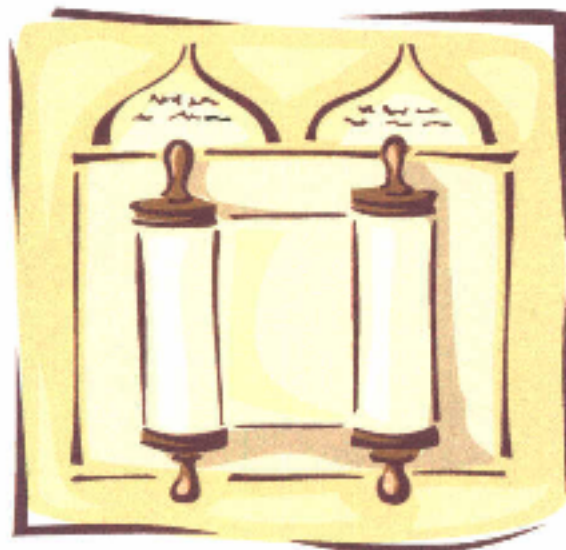
There is no (human) wisdom or understanding or counsel (that can prevail) against the Lord.

Pr 21:30

The eyes of the Lord keep guard over knowledge and him who has it, but He overthrows the words of the treacherous.

Pr 22:12

The Proverbs of Wisdom and Folly continue throughout the entire book.



2. GOOD AND EVIL

Solomon's sons were instructed to do good and avoid evil, to shun bad company and not be led astray into folly by the ways of those prone to anger, drunkenness, violence, greed and immorality. Keeping these instructions in thought, word and deed influence others. (Pr.10:17) Walking in God's good ways bring health of mind and body with His blessings continuing into old age.

The proverbs concerning the folly of BAD COMPANY are included in this section.

My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent.

Pr 1:10

*Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not into the path of evil men.
They eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence.*

Pr 4:14,17

*The path of the just and righteous is like the light of dawn.
The way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know over what they stumble.*

Pr 4:18-19

Keep and guard your heart with all vigilance for out of it flow the springs of life.

Pr 4:23



For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching (of the law) is light, and reproofs of discipline are the way of life.

Pr 6:23

*He who heeds instruction and correction is in the way of life and for others.
He who neglects or refuses reproof goes astray, but also causes to err and is a path toward ruin for others.*

Pr 10:17

The hope of the righteous is gladness, but the expectation of the wicked comes to nothing.

Pr 10:28

The righteousness of the blameless shall make plain their way and keep it straight, but the wicked shall fall by their own wickedness.

Pr 11:5

The righteous is delivered out of trouble but the wicked gets into it instead.

Pr 11:8

GOOD AND EVIL - continued

When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices, but when the wicked perish there are shouts of joy.

Pr 11:10

The desire of the righteous brings only good, but the expectation of the wicked brings wrath.

Pr 11:23

He who diligently seeks good seeks (God's) favour, but he who searches after evil, it shall come upon him.

Pr 11:27

The next text is the only one in Proverbs that begins with *Behold* - and so very important.

Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed on earth; how much more the wicked and the sinner! And if the righteous are barely saved, what will become of the ungodly and wicked?

Pr 11:31 (1 Peter 4:18)

The second part of the next text is very good advice -

A fool's wrath is quickly known, but a prudent man ignores an insult.

Pr 12:16

Man's righteousness is not God's standard of righteousness for the heart of man is prone to evil and folly. Solomon's next proverb reveals the path of righteousness is the way to eternal life where there is no death. This is the Gospel's New Testament message of God's free gift of eternal life – and by His righteousness, the sinner's turning from darkness to light through the willing sacrifice of God's only Son, the sinless Lord Jesus Christ.

Life is in the way of the righteous, and in its pathway there is no death but eternal life.

Pr.12:28

Go from the presence of a foolish man, for you will not find knowledge on his lips.

Pr14:7

He who is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who is hasty of spirit exalts his folly.

Pr 14:29

Uprightness and right standing with God elevates a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.

Pr 14: 34

The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is His delight.

Pr 15:8

A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger appeases contention.

Pr 15:18

GOOD AND EVIL – continued

When a man's ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.
Pr 16:7

It is an abomination (to God and men) for kings to commit wickedness, for a throne is established and made secure by righteousness.
Pr 16:12

The hoary head is a crown of beauty and glory if it is found in the way of righteousness.
Pr 16:31

Whoever rewards evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house. Pr 17:13

He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous are both an abomination to the Lord.
Pr 17:15



The category - GOOD AND EVIL is detailed, wide ranging and includes the characteristics of happiness and cheerfulness as in the next two verses. The righteous live lives with hope in their hearts and receive the blessings of joy and gladness, whereas the hopes of the unrighteous come to nothing. The source of such characteristics always stems from living a good life by following Wisdom's way of righteousness and not descending into evil with its consequences of folly and death. The secret is keeping close to God in prayer and obeying Him in the reverent and worshipful fear of the Lord. Remember - King Solomon, gifted by God with great wisdom, slipped and slithered into folly in the second part of his life.

Anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down, but an encouraging word makes it glad.
Pr 12:25

A happy heart is good medicine and a cheerful mind works healing, but a broken spirit dries up the bones.
Pr 17:22 (15:13)



The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe, high (above evil) and strong.

Pr 18:10

The strong spirit of a man sustains him in bodily pain or trouble, but a weak or broken spirit who can raise up or bear?

Pr 18:14

A man's gift makes room for him and brings him before great men. Pr 18:16

GOOD AND EVIL - continued

Good sense makes a man restrain his anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offence.
Pr 19:11

Wine is a mocker, strong drink a riotous brawler; and whoever errs or reels because of it is not wise.
Pr 20:1

It is an honour for a man to cease from strife and keep aloof from it, but every fool will quarrel.
Pr 20:3

Who can say, I have made my heart clean. I am pure from my sin? Pr 20:9

Yes, all mankind sin; and this is why God sent Jesus to die to save us from our sins.

Do not say, I will repay evil; wait for the Lord and He will rescue you. Pr 20:22

Loving-kindness and mercy, truth and faithfulness preserve the king, and his throne is upheld by the people's loyalty.
Pr 20:28

To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.
Pr 21:3

When justice is done, it is a joy to the righteous, but to the evildoers it is dismay, calamity and ruin.
Pr 21:15

Drive out the scoffer and contention will go out; yes, strife and abuse will cease. Pr 22:10

The next four verses are from the Sayings of the Wise –

He who plans to do evil will be called a mischief-maker. Pr 24:8

A righteous man falls seven times and rises again, but the wicked are overthrown by calamity.
Pr 24:16

Rejoice not when your enemy falls, and let not your heart be glad when he is overthrown. Lest the Lord see it and it be evil in His eyes and displease Him, and He turn away His wrath from him.
Pr 24:17-18

GOOD AND EVIL – continued

BAD COMPANY and of IMMORAL WOMEN

Wisdom and knowledge must be applied to gain in understanding and the prudence of discretion. Discretion will also deliver men from of all manner of wickedness - violence, anger, drunkenness; including the temptations of the evil woman with her flattering words. Idle young men with no commonsense fall easy prey to the evil charms of a loose woman. Solomon advised his sons against the charms of immoral women, for adultery is the sin of uncleanness and leads to poverty and destroys a man's life. In the second part of his reign, Solomon fell prey to these very sins. The sin of uncleanness and immorality leads to the break up of kingdoms and empires - eg. The Fall of Jerusalem and the break up of the Roman Empire.

Discretion shall watch over you, understanding shall deliver you from the alien woman with her flattering words. Pr 2:11,16

Let your way in life be far from her, and come not near the door of her house. Pr 5:8

Let your children be for you alone, and not the children of strangers with you. Rejoice in the wife of your youth Pr 5:17-18

Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks heart and understanding; he who does it is destroying his own life.

Pr 6:32

Jealousy makes (the wronged man) furious; he will not spare in the day of vengeance. Pr 6:34

Solomon continues to advise his son to keep his words and avoid the sin of uncleanness.



Keep my law and teaching as the apple (the pupil) of your eye. Pr 7:2

That they may keep you from the loose woman, from the adventuress who flatters with and makes smooth her words.

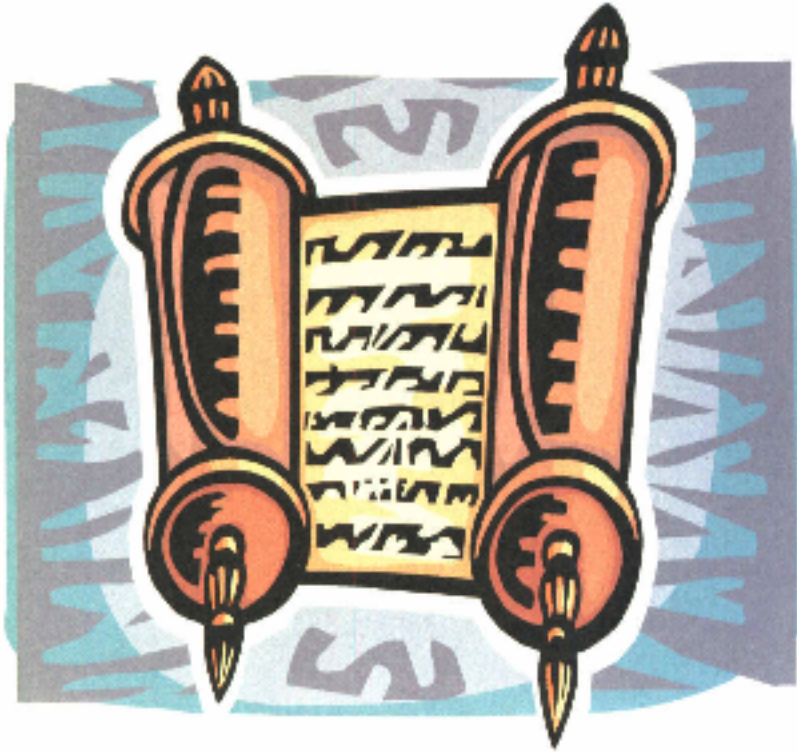
Pr 7:5

The mouth of a loose woman is a deep pit; he with whom the Lord is indignant and who is abhorrent to Him will fall into it.

Pr 22:14

The temptress is a married woman (Pr 7:19-20) and not a prostitute, a woman of the street. For those scorning Wisdom and entering the door of the foolish woman (Pr 9:13-18) there is only the grave of the dead; often the ruin of foolish young men.

BOOK OF PROVERBS



PART 2 next.

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