

Sunday AM (Communion) - The Way is Open

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Date: 31 August 2014

Preacher: Rev Ewen Matheson

[0 : 00] We're going to read together two passages of Scripture, and I hope that the connection will be apparent to you. And first of all, from Hebrews and chapter 10.

We're reading from Hebrews and chapter 10 at verse 1. Let's hear God's word.

For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.

Otherwise would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshippers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sin. But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sin every year.

For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me.

[1 : 29] In burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.

When he said, Above you have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings, and burnt offerings and sin offerings. These are offered according to the law. Then he added, Behold, I have come to do your will.

He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet.

For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us.

[2 : 41] For after saying, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord, I will put my laws on their hearts and write them on their minds.

Then he adds, I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more. Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is through his flesh.

And since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another.

[3 : 52] And all the more, as you see the day drawing near. Let us turn also to the gospel of Jesus Christ according to Matthew. Matthew's gospel and chapter 27.

And we are going to pick up the reading at verse 45 and we are just going to read a few verses from verse 45. Matthew 27 and verse 45.

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice saying, Eli, Eli, lemma sabachthani.

That is, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And some of the bystanders hearing it said, This man is calling Elijah.

And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. But the other said, Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.

[5 : 18] Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

And the earth shook and the rocks were split. And the tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised.

And coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many. When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, Truly, this was the Son of God.

Amen. May God bless the readings of his own word. Let's continue in our praise of God in Psalm 40, as you find it on page 259, Psalm 40.

And we're actually going to pick up the singing at verse 4.

[6 : 33] This is Psalm, of course, a great affirmation of faith. We're familiar with this Psalm, but it's also the Psalm that is quoted in Hebrews with regards to Jesus, as we read together.

Psalm 40, verse 4. Oh, blessed is the man whose trust upon the Lord relies, respecting not the proud nor such as turn aside to lies.

And then, of course, in verse 6. No sacrifice nor offering didst thou at all desire, mine ears thou bords, and offering thou in burntst didst not require. And to the Lord these were my words.

I come, behold and see, within the volume of the book it written is of me. Let's stand and sing praise to God from Psalm 40, verses 4 to 7.

O blessed is the man whose trust upon the Lord relies, respecting not the pride nor such as turn aside to lies.

[7 : 55] O Lord my God, O many are the wonders of our son, Thy gracious song, To us work far above, All thoughts are gone.

In order, In order, And where, O man, To the earth, Then he pray, And seek, O man, I will, I will, Then more, And come, Be number, God, To sacrifice, Not offering, It's not at all desire, My ears, My ears, The Lord, Set off, With love,

And words, His God, Be quiet, Then to the Lord, He's well, Where, My words, I come, Behold, And seek, Within the volume of the blue, It will, It is of me.

Let's turn to the passage that we read together in Matthew's Gospel, Matthew chapter 27.

Matthew chapter 27, and let's read again from verse 51. And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom, and the earth shook, and the rocks were split.

[10 : 54] We come as we may expect today at a time like this to come to Calvary's cross and to consider what occurs here.

And the cross of Christ is at the very center of the message of the gospel. The Bible affirms to us that this is the single most important message of the whole world.

That there is no message like the gospel. That it comes to us, and it confronts us with this wonderful invitation to come to Jesus.

We are reminded in the Bible that the greatest problem in the world is the problem of sin. And here at the very heart of the gospel, we have the great solution.

We have a savior for our sin. We have salvation here. And the greatest problem that we have in our lives, and the greatest problem in the world is dealt with here.

[12 : 07] That here we find Jesus who died for the sins of his people. And in the realization of what the gospel teaches us, it tells us about our sin.

It tells us about salvation. It tells us about redemption through no other way but through Jesus. But the Bible doesn't just take us to the cross.

And as we've been seeing recently, it takes us even further. And we're on our journey. And the destination in our own hope and aspirations is the destination of heaven.

But the Bible is very clear. It's emphatic that the only way to get there is through trusting in Jesus Christ. When Jesus meets with Nicodemus in John chapter 3, he tells Nicodemus of the great need to be born again.

You must be born again. And so to enter into heaven, we must be born again. We must experience the new birth. Trusting and hoping in Jesus.

[13 : 19] And the Bible affirms us again and again the exclusivity of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus himself teaches us. He teaches there's no other way.

There's no other way to the Father but through him. That he is the way. He is the gate. He is the only way of salvation. That there is no other way to the Father's house but that we follow Jesus.

And we commit ourselves fully to him. And when we come here, we are reminded of Jesus dealing with this great problem.

We are reminded how we achieve heaven. It is through Jesus and the finished work on Calvary's cross.

He grants us the access. He makes the entrance open. He is the one who has gone before us and died in order that we may live.

[14 : 25] And just for a short time today, we just want us to consider a little bit of the symbolism of this curtain torn in verse 51.

The torn curtain. And the context we have is the completion on the cross. And we come here today to reflect once again on the greatest event in all of history.

The greatest event in the whole world. The greatest event in your world. And my world. That here is Christ. And Calvary's cross.

And immediately after his death in verse 50, Jesus cried out with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. Behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two. That there is a message for us to understand.

And the message comes after the cry of completion. We learn this in John chapter 19 and verse 30. Jesus cries, it is finished.

[15 : 32] He has completed the work that the Father has given him to do. He has paid the penalty for the sins of his people. He has redeemed them here on Calvary's cross.

And now he is able to say, it is finished. And he commits his spirit to the Father. And he breathes his last. And Jesus is there suspended on the cross.

And his body is lifeless. For he has died. Died for our sins. And God is satisfied.

And satisfied. Because justice demanded that our penalty would be paid. And that there is no peace before God.

Unless we come through this way of Calvary's cross. There is no other way that you can deal with your sin. We read together in Hebrews where the worshippers are going year by year.

[16 : 40] And committing themselves to the same rituals. And the same sacrifices. And the same religious behavior. And still they have to go next year. And next year.

And next year. And yet here is the full and final sacrifice. That every other way is inadequate. Whatever we think about ourselves.

Whatever we think that we can achieve before God. God is telling us in the gospel. This is the only way to satisfy justice demands. To realize what Christ has done.

How he has dealt with our sin. Because we cannot deal with it ourselves. We have been taught here that Jesus is the only way.

Where this great problem is dealt with. Where we have this completeness and acceptability. Through Christ. And through his great sacrifice.

[17 : 43] Jesus is here in this place. Jesus is here as the substitute for his people. You remember how someone else said.

In my place condemned he stood. He is not here because he is guilty. He is innocent. He is there because we are guilty.

That our sin needs to be dealt with. And here he is. In our place. Suspended between heaven and earth. Suffering and dying for our sin.

Because of his love for us. To manifest our hope. To give us something of substance and completeness. To be able to stand before God.

And to recognize the greatest event of all. Is the greatest event of our lives. That Jesus died for our sin.

[18 : 41] We are conscious of the darkness. In verse 45. In the sixth hour there was darkness until the ninth hour. The darkness of course we recognize.

As a picture of the judgment of God. Darkness is a picture throughout scripture of God's judgment. And here is God's judgment. And even here in verse 46.

The cry of Christ being forsaken by his father. The penalty for our sin. The wrath of God poured upon him.

For us. In our place. Condemned. He stood. He did this. Because of his love for us.

Because he didn't want us to suffer. Because he didn't want us to go to our lost eternity. Because he wants to open the way to heaven. And take us in.

[19 : 42] To the father's house. And when the wrath is poured upon him. There is darkness. Over the land. And then verse 46. The ninth hour.

This reminds us. That light has come. The darkness is over. That the place is now illuminated. After the sacrifice of Christ.

Light comes in. And what a picture this is for us. Because this is how John's gospel begins. It tells us that Jesus is the light of the world.

And Jesus is not just light. But life. And established here. At the death of Jesus. Is light. That the place is once again.

Illuminated. It's illuminated. To point to the one. Who is the light of the world. The savior of his people. To teach us. About Jesus. The one who illuminates the darkness of the scene.

- [20 : 51] And who has illuminated the darkness of our lives. And our hearts. And brought light and life into our experience. To give us hope. To cause us to look.
- To him. To cause us to look. To him. The context is the completion on the cross. But really we want to look at this curtain. Because the curtain establishes.
- That the access. Is open. Is open. And you see here. How. This occurs. In verse 50. Jesus cried out with a loud voice. He yielded up his spirit. Behold. The curtain of the temple was torn in two.
- Immediately. This occurs. This great. Symbolic. Act. That here in the temple courts. The curtain is ripped open. And there is a message from heaven.
- And there is a message from heaven. Following the death. Of Jesus. The curtain of course. Was part of the furniture and the fabric of the temple. And also actually of the tabernacle.
- [21 : 50] From which the temple is itself modeled on. It is the second curtain that. Is being referred to here. And it cuts off. The most holy place.
- From the rest of the temple. And. No one can go past this curtain. Except the high priest. And once a year.
- In the temple courts. There is the court of the women. The women are restricted to go any further. Then there is the court. Of Israel. And the Jewish men are.
- Permitted to go no further. Then there is the holy place. And the priests enter in there. But even the priests themselves. Are restricted.
- And there is this great curtain. And only the high priest. And only once a year. And with sacrifice. He enters in. The curtain itself was.
- [22 : 49] Quite a substantial curtain. We understand that it was probably. About four inches thick. In Exodus chapter 26. And verse 31.
- Describing the curtain. Of the tabernacle. It is blue and purple. And this fine. Twined linen. And it is made with cherubim. Skillfully worked into it.
- And it would have been a beautiful. Seeing this curtain. The curtain. But what lies behind the curtain. Is mysterious. Because everybody else is cut off.
- Even the priesthood. Except for the high priest. And once a year. And the symbolism. Of the curtain itself. Speaks to us.
- Of the final barrier. And the obstacle. You remember. How the tabernacle. Is God's dwelling. With his people. The temple.
- [23 : 46] Is supposed to fulfill. The same type. That there. In the wilderness. That the people. Of Israel. Believe that God. Was with them. Because the tabernacle.
- The ark. Was there. In their midst. It was there. The picture of God. Dwelling with his people. And now. For Israel. In Jerusalem. In Jerusalem.
- There is the picture. That the temple. Is there. They find their identity. There. With the temple. This is where they belong. This is the heart. Of who they are. Their religious.
- And political identity. Is here. With God. That God. Is with them. That God. Is there. And yet. The reality is. That despite all.
- Their privileges. And despite all. The courts. They're able. To enter in. And despite how far. They're able. To enter into the temple. There is still. One final barrier. Between them.
- [24 : 41] And God. And the dwelling place. With God. It stands. To prohibit them. It keeps them. At a distance. This splendid.
- Beautiful. Curtain. Keeping them out. Keeping this barrier. Ensuring that the most holy place. And this audience.

With God. With God. Remains. Inaccessible. But once a year. And to the high priest. And then. Jesus died.

And then the curtain. Is torn. From top. To bottom. At that moment. On that day. When Jesus died.

God ripped open the temple. temple. And this is no minor tear. This is a big. Thick.

[25 : 39] Substantial. Fabric. And it is torn open. And rendered useless. It no longer stands as a barrier. It no longer encloses the most holy place.

Now it is open. From top to bottom. Top to bottom. It is a divine act. It is ripped from heaven. To earth. God did this.

God is sending a message. This is a divine act. And this is a public act. We are reminded here. In verse 46.

That it is about the ninth hour. It is 3 p.m. time. And you remember. It is Passover. The greatest religious feast.

Of Israel. And the Jews have come from all over. And they have come to be in Jerusalem. They have come to be here. At the time of the Passover.

[26 : 37] And the temple courts are busy. And they are full of this enthusiasm. And excitement. With all of these people. All around. With this religious festivity.

And all eyes are on the temple. And it is 3 p.m. on Passover day. The time of the evening sacrifice. All eyes.

Are on there. On this temple. On this curtain. Prohibiting them. From God.

And it is ripped open. And it is a deliberate act. Because this is a message. And it is not a message from Jesus.

His lips now. Are still. And silent. His breath is gone. His breath is gone. Jesus.

[27 : 45] Crucified. This is a message from God. This is a message from heaven. To earth. And this message says many things to us.

It tells us. It tells us of course. That the ceremonial law is fulfilled. Our reading in Hebrews reminds us of this. Every year they were going. Continually making the same sacrifices.

And now it is over. It is no longer required. Because the greater sacrifice is here. Why continue with all the shadows. Why continue with all the shadows. When the fulfillment is here.

Why continue slaughtering lambs. When the lamb of God has been crucified. Why continue with all of these acts. When the reality has now come.

Where Jesus is here. The ceremonial law is over. It is complete. It reminds us. That divine justice has been satisfied. That God is pleased with this sacrifice.

[28 : 49] That this justice. Has been propitiated. Through the sacrifice. Of Christ. And the wrath of God. For the sins.

Of his people. It reminds us. That the temple is judged. They were there. They were there.

In the temple. And they were there. Just a few days before. Shouting. Crucify him. Crucify him. The people.

Born into privilege. And expectation. Were unable. To recognize the lamb. Were unable. To close in. With Christ.

Were unable. To accept. Jesus. As their savior. And so. They rejected him. And the temple. Worship.

[29 : 47] Is now false. Because it doesn't. Accept Jesus. But rejects him. But most of all. There is no more exclusion.

Exclusion. There is no longer. A barrier. And everything. That kept us out. Is gone. Every obstacle. That stood in our way.

It's gone. All the prohibitions. Of the temple. The prohibition. Of the curtain. And what it's saying to us. Is that the way.

To God. Is open. That access. Is here. And not only. Is it open. It's been torn. Open. It's been. Ripped apart. And with this.

Great access. Given to us. There is this. Invitation. To come in. To come in. And to lay hold. Of these things. To enter into. The most holy place.

[30 : 45] To know that the Lord. Has gone. To prepare a place. For us. In the father's house. And God is satisfied. Satisfied. With his sacrifice. And the way. And the access. Is open.

Torn apart. Through the. Suffering. Of Jesus. On the cross. It's amazing too. When. The writer. To the Hebrews.

Refers to this. In Hebrews. Chapter 10. And in verse 20. He says. I knew. A living way. And we're affirming this. And he said. It's open to us. Through the curtain.

He says. The curtains. The flesh. The flesh. Of Jesus. And he sees. The picture. Of this torn. Curtain. In the body. That is broken.

On Calvary's cross. In divine justice. Being satisfied. Here. In this painful. And awful. Death. Where Jesus. Fulfills.

[31 : 40] All the types. Of the sacrifices. In the temple. And he fulfills. What the temple. Itself is. That the Lord. Has tabernacled. With us. He is here. And so.

The writer. That the Hebrew. Says. The new. And living. Way. Is open. Jesus. His body. Is broken. So that.

We can. Enter in. So that. We can. Be there. So that. There is nothing. That would. Hinder us.

Maybe. Maybe. We feel. That the real. Curtain. Is our sin. That this is. What needs. To be dealt. With. And the sin.

Is dealt. With the obstacle. Is torn. Again. Here. As we see. The curtain. Being ripped. And divine. Justice.

[32 : 36] Being. Satisfied. All. The barriers. Are gone. We are being. Pointed. To look. To Calvary. To look.

To Jesus. To see. What he has. Achieved. And to see. That the way. To heaven. Is through him. It is a blood. Stained.

Way. It is through his. Broken. Body. And his. Shed blood. This is the curtain. Ripped open. And we are.

Let in. The axis. Is here. In verse 51. We are actually told. That the tearing.

Of the curtain. Is not on its own. We are told also. That the earth shook. The rocks split. The tombs opened. The bodies of the saints. Were raised up. Can you imagine.

[33 : 32] What this scene. Was like. That here. We have. These great. Tremors. In the earth. And all of these. Great.

Different features. Being brought. Before us. The rocks. Splitting open. The tombs. Being opened. And the dead. Rising. The great. Wonder.

Of everything. That is happening. Here. These great. Miraculous. Events. Thing. They are all. Messages. From heaven. And no wonder.

All of these. Things happen. No wonder. Because God's son. Is dead on the cross. And heaven. Cannot be silent. But it's pointing.

Towards. The significance. Of this event. The significance. That the Passover lamb. Has now been slain. Drawing our attention. Here. This frightening.

[34 : 28] Sin. Of the earth. Shaking. And the rock. Splitting. And the dead. Rising. And no wonder. The centurion. Cries. In verse 54.

Surely. This is the son. Of God. This is what. These things. Are taking us to. They're all. Messages. From heaven. Pointing. To Jesus.

Pointing. To the savior. Of the world. And a way. That is made. Open. The access. To God. The access. To heaven. A place.

Prepared. For you. Here it is. What we've. Always. Waited for. When this. Becomes.

Real. When Jesus's word. Is so powerful. When it. Impacts. Our heart. And soul. When it goes into.

[35 : 23] Our inner being. And when we hear him. Saying to us. Come to me. Come all you. Who labor. And heavy laden. When a door. Or a curtain. Is open.

It's an invitation. This is. Our invitation. This is. How. We. Come in. The way. Is open.

And God. Has prepared. This place. For us. This place. Called heaven. Where there is. No pain. There is. No end. To the glory.

Of that place. Beautiful. In its. Splendor. No more death. Being there. With God's people. Forever. This is what God. Is preparing. For us.

The wonder. Of the place. Called heaven. The wonder. And we see. The curtain. Open. And we say. This is what I want. Peace.

[36 : 18] For my soul. And access. To God. And I've come. Through the new. And living way. I've come. Through Jesus. Who paid. For my sin.

Here is the gospel.

And the gospel is no longer. Just for one people group. It's for all peoples. For the new people. And there. Jesus.

As established. The tearing. Of another obstacle. It is no longer. Just for those. Who are descended. From Abraham. This is for the whole world.

Let all peoples. Praise you. And so the gospel. Has to go out. To the whole world. From here. From Calvary. And the world. Is still shaking.

[37 : 20] Where lives. Are being transformed. Where this change. O cars. And your world. Absolutely. Changes. And there is nothing. Like it. And it's still going on.

In the lives. Of people. This earth shaking. Event. Where we see. What Christ. Has done. For us. And when we see. Heaven.

Open. For us. And the Lord. Saying to us. In his message. From heaven. No more barrier. Nothing else. Holds you back. Back. You're called.

To enter in. You're called. To be there. You're called. To exercise. The faith. And to see. That this is. For you. This is. For you.

Jesus. Died. For you. And he gives you this. Forgiveness. A life eternal. And a place. In the father's house.

[38 : 15] He did this. For you. He opened it. To let. You. In. And the only obstacle. That could stop you. Now.

Is unbelief. That's the only obstacle. Left to stand between people. And God. Because every other barrier.

Has been torn open. And put away. And put away. And the only thing. Today. That doesn't let you into God. Is your unbelief. Your unwillingness.

To submit to him. That is why you're not entering into heaven. Because you're unwilling to believe.

Jesus has done all of this. He's died for the sins of his people. And God tears the curtain. To welcome you. To invite you.

[39 : 13] To call you. To come. And that's all you have to do. You will not be able. To enter into heaven. Because of who you are.

Or what you've done. You can only enter in. Because of what Jesus. Has done. It's done. This is why you're here Christian. This is not.

You're not here. Because you feel. That you've achieved anything. Not at all. You're not even here. Based on your feelings. Sometimes.

They prohibit us. From so much. We're not here. Because of our expectations. Of ourselves. Or who we think we are. Or our history.

Or our identity. In ourselves. And in our families. We're here. Because Jesus. Has led us in. We're here.

[40 : 18] Because of what Christ. Has done. We're here. And I want you. To be encouraged. Today. As you are here. The writer. To the Hebrews.

As we saw. Last night. Was. Seeking. To encourage. The Christians. And seeking. To encourage them. In their own journey. And he tells us.

In verse 22. Of the. Chapter. We read together. Chapter 10. With a true heart. Full assurance. Of our faith. And then. He says.

Let us hold fast. The confession. Of our hope. Without wavering. And of course. Elsewhere. He speaks too. Of our own hope.

Being sure. And steadfast. And steadfast. In chapter 6. And in verse 19. We have this. As a sure. And steadfast. Anchor. For the soul.

[41 : 15] A hope. That enters in. To the inner place. Behind. The curtain. I want you to. Be here today.

With a hope. That is sure. And steadfast. That goes into the inner place. To find. To find. Your identity. And your confidence. Not in how you feel.

About yourself. But in what Christ. Has done. For you. Not in your performance. But the writer.

To the Hebrews. Says. That our hope. Is concrete. And stable. When it's focused. On Jesus. The message. From heaven. Is to bring us. The conclusion.

Truly. This. Was the son of God. This is what we're saying. This is our savior. This is our lord. This is.

[42 : 12] The son. Of God. And he has. Made a way for you. Into the father's house. It is open. It is free.

It is blood stained. Because his body. Because his body. Was broken. For you. For you. We've begun.

Really. By considering. Our own sense of. Identity. And understanding. Of our desire. To get into heaven.

And we're reminded here. That this is the way. That this is the way. We're called to walk. In it. That the lord.

Has given this great. Invitation. And. The curtain. Is torn. So that there is no more barrier. The curtain is torn.

[43 : 11] So that we are no longer. Prevented. The curtain is torn. By the death of Jesus. And to invite you. To take your place.

If you love the lord. Your place is here. With the lord's people. Remembering his. Broken body.

There's no longer any hindrance. There is no longer any obstruction. There is no longer anything. Keeping you. At a distance. There is no longer any.

Need. To be discouraged. You be encouraged. By the sure. And steadfast hope. You have. In what Jesus has achieved.

He yielded his spirit. And the curtain. Of the temple. Was torn. In the world. Let's pray together. God our father in heaven.

[44 : 17] We give thanks to you. For the wonder. Of the cross. For everything. That it means to us. For what Jesus has done. In his own body.

For the access. That's been given to us. We thank you lord. For the great invitation. To enter in. And to find our place. We thank you lord.

That you are our loving. Heavenly father. We thank you. That Jesus loved us. So greatly. That he died for us. We pray that you would bless us.

And forgive us. When we put up. The obstacle. Of unbelief. We pray lord. That we would always see. That these curtains. And barriers. Have been torn.

By what Christ has achieved. And all we ask. Is in his name. Amen. Let's continue in our praise of God. In Psalm 22. On page 27.

[45 : 15] Let's continue in our praise of God. In Psalm 22. On page 27. We're going to sing.

From verse 22. Remember of course. The psalm. Begins with the psalmist. Sense of. Remember of course. The psalm. Begins with the psalmist.

Sense of.

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