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The Lamanites—"And They Shall Be Restored"

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Abstract: This article discusses how the Book of Mormon prophesies much concerning the Lamanites. It is the responsibility of the Church to help them to fulfill their great destiny. It states that many are receiving the gospel and are bearing fervent testimonies and living the gospel. The author includes a letter from a father to his son in which he counsels the son to look for the "Mormons," who have the record of his people, and the son then writes of his search for this book that would teach him the true gospel, which he found in the Book of Mormon.

THE LAMANITES—"And They Shall Be Restored"

Address delivered at the Friday morning session of the 118th semi-annual general conference October 3, 1947, in the Tabernacle

By *Spencer W. Kimball* OF THE COUNCIL OF THE TWELVE

I HUMBLY ask for an interest in your faith and prayers this morning as I stand before you on this rare and delightful occasion. It is truly an inspiration to see the priesthood sitting before us with other members of the Church in this great and historic building.

Since the last conference it has been my privilege to visit many of the tribes of Indians and spend some time down in Mexico among others of the Lamanites. In Mexico I found many pure-blood Indians who are living the gospel of Jesus Christ. They are in or-

One of the very first revelations to the Church in this last dispensation came through the Prophet Joseph Smith to Oliver Cowdery, and he said:

... behold, I say unto you that you shall go unto the Lamanites and preach my gospel unto them; and inasmuch as they receive thy teachings thou shalt cause my church to be established among them, ... (D. & C. 28:8.)

We have now, a stake in Hawaii, the membership of which is largely Lehtes. We have branches of the Church in Spanish-America and in the islands of the sea in great numbers. We now have an Indian branch in South

door for the establishing of the gospel among the Lamanites, who will receive the gospel and their endowments and the blessings of God. (*Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, pp. 38, 39.)

Then in Second Nephi we have this:

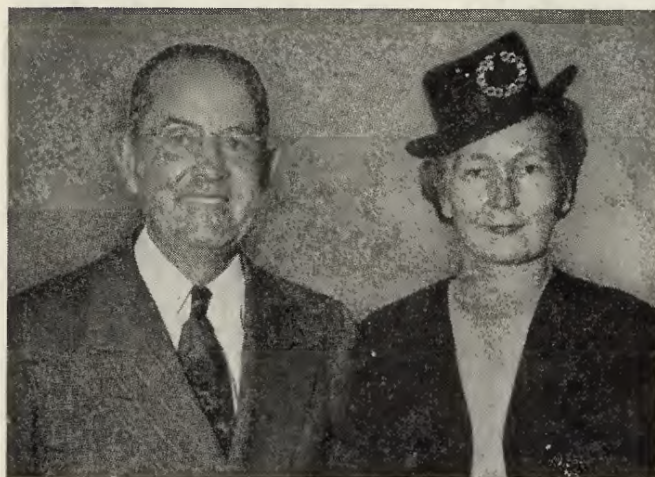
And the gospel of Jesus Christ shall be declared among them; wherefore, they shall be restored unto the knowledge of their fathers, and also to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, which was had among their fathers. (II Nephi 30:5.)

I am sure that the consummation of the work of the kingdom of God in this dispensation cannot be realized without this important feature of the restitution of all things.

In Third Nephi the Lord has inspired his prophet to say this:

And then shall the work of the Father commence at that day, even when this gospel shall be preached among the remnant of this people. Verily I say unto you, at that day shall the work of the Father commence among all the dispersed of my people, yea, even the tribes which have been lost, ... (III Nephi 21:26.)

It has been said that the gospel would be preached and that nations would be "born in a day." There was a period back in 1875-6 when there were great numbers of Indians who came into the Church. There was Chief Poko-Tel-Lo from the Snake River, who, with his entire band, was baptized into the Church, and they left Salt Lake City going back to their homes determined to refrain from all evil practices. The old chief said that the other Indians were interested, and there would be many who would be baptized. There were fifty from the north who came down. Chief Alma with twenty-two of his people from the Salmon River



ELDER SPENCER W. KIMBALL AND SISTER KIMBALL

ganized branches. There was the Aztec group down south of Popocatepetl Volcano. I found them dancing the Gold and Green Ball, though generally they go barefooted. I found them in Mutual activities of all kinds, singing temple anthems, dancing, dramatizing, and doing many of the things which we do here at home. And it became my hope that such might be the privilege of all of the Indians or Lamanites, everywhere in the world, and that the Church blessings might be brought to them.

I realize that the responsibility is ours to bring the gospel with all its progress and culture of the Indian. No other people in the world have the program to give to them, and so it is up to us to do this. As we realize this, our great responsibility, we remember the scripture which says,

... I will soften the hearts of the Gentiles, that they shall be like unto a father to them. ... (II Nephi 10:18.)

Carolina. We have Indian wards in the Malad Stake and in the Maricopa Stake. But our responsibility has not yet been met, for we have some sixty million people in these Americas who have some of the blood of Israel in their veins and who must hear the gospel.

The Prophet Joseph Smith is quoted by President Wilford Woodruff in referring to this important matter. May I quote his words. The Prophet was talking to a group of the priesthood, and he said,

Brethren ... you know no more concerning the destinies of this church and kingdom than a babe upon its mother's lap. You don't comprehend it. ...

It is only a handful of priesthood you see here tonight, but this church will fill North and South America—it will fill the world.

It will fill the Rocky Mountains. There will be tens of thousands of Latter-day Saints who will be gathered in the Rocky Mountains, and there they will open the

"... BEHOLD, I say unto you that you shall go unto the Lamanites and preach my gospel unto them; and inasmuch as they receive thy teachings thou shalt cause my church to be established among them. ..." (D. & C. 28:8.)

"AND the gospel of Jesus Christ shall be declared among them; wherefore, they shall be restored unto the knowledge of their fathers, and also to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, which was had among their fathers." (II Nephi 30:5.)

country came down and were baptized into the Church. The chief made the prediction that there would be hundreds and thousands of the Indians come into the Church. Orson Pratt
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JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH

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and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men. (D. & C. 19:16-19.)

Now, when he said that if we do not repent we will have to suffer even as he did, he had no reference to being nailed to a cross, but it was the torment of mind, of spirit, that he had reference to, before he ever got to the cross, and if men will not repent, they will have to suffer even as he suffered.

Now brethren, briefly, he did all this for us, the Son of God, and he did it, as I have read to you, because his Father commanded him and because his Father so loved the world that he wanted to save the world from its sins.

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baptized fifty-two and blessed nine papooses down at Mount Pleasant in June of that year. In July there were eighty-five of Kanosh's band who were baptized into the Church, and the following year there were forty-one men and thirty-nine women, Indians, baptized down at Kanab. It seems that there were a great many baptisms also up in the Malad country. I quote from *The Deseret News* of July 22, 1875:

... Yesterday we met with Brother G. W. Hill, who has charge of a colony of several hundred Indians, mostly of the Shoshone, Bannock, and Pah Ute tribes. They are Indians who have come forward and demanded to be baptized. The location is in Malad Valley, Idaho Territory. ... They declare their intention to wander about no more, but to lead industrious lives, at peace with all their fellow creatures, refraining from stealing and from all manner of bad practices, and abide by the conditions of their baptism, which are that they shall cease every species of wrongdoing. Elder Hill has baptized about three hundred since last spring.

Now, he has asked us to keep his commandments. He says they are not grievous, and there are so many of us who are not willing to do it. I am speaking now generally of the people of the earth. We are not willing to do it. That certainly is ingratitude. We are ungrateful. Every member of this Church that violates the Sabbath day, that is not honest in the paying of his tithing, that will not keep the Word of Wisdom, that wilfully violates any of the other commandments the Lord has given us, is ungrateful to the Son of God, and when ungrateful to the Son of God is ungrateful to the Father who sent him. If our Savior would do so much for us, how in the world is it that we are not willing to abide by his commandments which are not grievous, which do not cause us any suffering if we will only keep them? And yet, people break the Word of Wisdom; they

And then it was stated that these Indians had already shown their good faith. They were all blessing their food; they were having their family prayers; and they were attending their regular Sabbath meetings.

IN 1943 the Church organized the Navajo-Zuni Mission to look after the Indians in that area. This year the mission has been enlarged to include all of the Indians in Arizona and New Mexico and in the little strip in the southern part of Utah and Colorado. It is a full-time mission now. We are buying a mission home in Gallup, New Mexico, which will be the headquarters. And now young missionaries, elders and lady missionaries, are being called to this mission as the other missions in the Church.

This year the Uruguay Mission has been opened, and today with that mission and Brazil and Argentina, we have in South America 169 missionaries working among the Lamanites. This, of course, is in fulfilment of the dreams of the brethren and particularly the promise and prayer of Elder Melvin

refuse to attend to their duties as officers and members in the Church; many of them stay away from meetings the Lord has called upon them to support. They follow their own desires if they are in conflict with the commandments of the Lord.

If we understood our position and we loved the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind, or, as he has put it in the revelation given to us in these days:

Wherefore, I give unto them a commandment, saying thus: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy might, mind, and strength; and in the name of Jesus Christ thou shalt serve him. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself (D. & C. 59:5, 6)

then we would keep his commandments; when we will not do this, I tell you, my brethren and sisters, we show ingratitude to Jesus Christ.

In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

J. Ballard when on the 25th of December in 1925 he stood on the banks of El Rio de La Plata at Buenos Aires, and under the weeping willow trees there, blessed South America. He said this, among other things:

... I turn the key, unlock, and open the door for the preaching of the gospel in all these South American nations, and rebuke, and command to be stayed, every power that would oppose the preaching of the gospel in these lands. And we do bless and dedicate these nations, and this land for the preaching of the gospel. ... (*The Improvement Era*, April 1926, pp. 575, 576.)

And in the last three months two new fields have been opened. Mexican missionaries from the Mexican Mission have been sent into Guatemala and Costa Rica, and the work is going forward with the approval and hearty response, it seems, of the leading authorities of those nations.

We have the Mexican Mission, the Spanish-American Mission and the Navajo-Zuni Mission here in the United States and Mexico, in addition to all the program in the isles of the sea. The work in the stakes is going forward. There are Indians in many of the stakes here in the West, and the stake presidents are looking after the proselyting of these Indians within their boundaries, especially in the Blackfoot, Roosevelt, Sevier, Parowan, and other stakes.

We are glad of the work that has been renewed in the missions of the Church, especially here in North America. In Canada some very splendid work is being done in the Six-Nations Reservation over near Brantford, Ontario, and in central Canada there are two large reservations, the "Carry the Kettle" Reservation and the Piapot, where President Ivins recently visited, and between 175 and 200 Indians came and attended his meetings. Those were the largest meetings, I understand, in his entire mission visit in western Canada.

We have the Ponca and the Sioux Indians who are showing interest in

THE IMPROVEMENT ERA



PRESIDENT ALMA SONNE,
European Mission

The only two members of the General Authorities not in attendance at conference since they are serving as mission presidents.



PRESIDENT S. DILWORTH YOUNG,
New England States Mission

SPENCER W. KIMBALL

Nebraska, and the Shoshones and the Arapahoes in Wyoming. We are doing work in the Rogue River, the Tule Rivers, and the Rancho Rio reservations in northern California, and the Menominee Reservation in the Northern States Mission. We have the Iroquois and the Catteraugas in New York, and it will be remembered that in 1830 when Oliver Cowdery began his missionary service among the Lamanites, that those were the first Indians to be visited in this dispensation. Today young elders are on motor bikes going out into the scattered areas and visiting the Indians, and are receiving a very warm welcome. The Cherokees in the East Central States Mission are interested. Their chief, Armichain, has indicated a great deal of helpfulness.

I would like to quote just a paragraph from a letter from one who has indicated intense interest and been most helpful.

... I drove ... with one of my Indian friends, Charles Crow, to Asheville, and met the lady missionaries and the elders there ... he was much impressed by them. ... We administered to one of the elders who was ill, Charles Crow witnessing the ordinance. ... He later told me that [that] was taught in the Bible, and we were the first people he ever knew of that used it. When I had my prayers that evening I knelt beside him. ... Before I had finished he put his arm on my shoulder and said, Elder Stokes, pray that I some day may also have such a testimony and a prayer in my heart.

It was my privilege at Malad Stake recently to see a large number of our Indian members of the Church. One of the sisters bore a wonderful testimony in the conference, and one of the old men dismissed the conference. He was one of those original three hundred baptized way back in 1875 by Brother Hill. He was deaf, but he offered a very fine prayer.

I believe that the interest generally is spreading and increasing and that we are on the dawn of a great day for the Lamanite people. Visiting the Mexican Mission in May I found of the seventy-one missionaries, fifteen of them were Lamanites, and I also found the young American missionaries were vying with each other to see who could be the companions of these Mexican and Indian missionaries because they were so efficient.

There have been baptisms by the hundreds. Some of the most recent ones were twenty baptisms in the Roosevelt Stake within the past few weeks. There were four at Sand Hills, Arizona. There were forty-one baptized in Mexico City in one day while I was there, and I witnessed their baptism. And then there were hundreds, many hundreds who have come back into fellowship in the Church in Mexico through the good graces of President George Albert Smith, President Arwell L. Pierce, and others who made contributions toward that great accomplishment.

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"When you come back, be sure that bag's full of FELS-NAPTHA SOAP"



THE GOLDEN BAR WITH THE CLEAN NAPTHA ODOR

SPENCER W. KIMBALL

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We have had schools in Mexico, in Hawaii, Tonga, and New Zealand. And so we are looking forward to a new day in schooling where our Lamanites may receive many of the advantages that our own children have.

A year ago we established down in Blanding, Utah, a small school, somewhat as an experiment. It has been very successful. With an outlay of only \$1,500 total, we have built and equipped a two-room schoolhouse there under the direction of Brother Albert R. Lyman, who has done a glorious work. There have been many donations of all kinds, in materials, in food, in clothing. For the first year they fed these little Indian children, twenty-seven of them, a warm midday meal, clothed them, and taught them not only the three R's but the gospel. It has been very successful, and we are delighted with the prospects that are ahead of us for the second year now which is beginning. I visited this school last year when it was in session. I noticed that three of the Indian women came, one of whom had five children, four in the school and one in the cradle upon her back. She sat at the sewing machine all day long in one corner of the larger schoolroom, and frequently we would see her going over to one of the little desks, kneeling down beside it to help her children to learn, and to impress upon them the importance of taking advantage of this unusual opportunity which many thousands of little boys and girls should, but do not have.

The 1946 report of the missions discloses the fact, that among the Lamanites there are six times as many converts for each missionary, as in all the other missions of the world, and there are twenty times as many converts for each missionary in the Lamanite missions as in some of the missions in Canada and the United States.

I HAD a letter the other day from a Tewa Indian in the Sand Hills of Arizona. His name is Vinton Polacca. He is the son of one Tom Polacca, who was baptized many years ago by

Jacob Hamblin or his contemporaries. And then it seemed that there were many decades when there were no missionaries in the area to give them help and courage. But Tom Polacca went on with his work, and he taught his children the Book of Mormon stories, and promised them that though it would be slow, the Church would come back again to them. Vinton and his wife, Fanny, were baptized a few years ago at Snowflake, Arizona. They spoke in the meetinghouse. They were entertained in the homes of the whites, and they were feted and banqueted as brothers and sisters. The story of the conversion of this man is most interesting.

He was walking through the little community one day near the store out near the Second Mesa in that sparsely inhabited area in northern Arizona. He heard a missionary talking to some Indians near his car. He listened a moment. It sounded like the things his father had told him those many, many years before, and when the missionary entered his car to go off some little distance to eat his lunch, this man who had started out to get his horse, and had his bridle on his arm, climbed on the side of the car, and they went some little distance and found a place to sit down. Neither the horse was caught nor the lunch eaten because this man became so involved in his learning of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And so he and his wife were baptized some little time later.

Let me quote from his letter a few paragraphs of which I believe will interest you. Brother Vinton is a young man in his forties with a splendid Indian family, part of whom we baptized recently. We held a testimony meeting with them in their own little home, away out in the sand hills, and I think it was the first testimony meeting they had attended and the first sacrament they had ever received. He was a priest, and I helped him to administer to the sacrament. His letter reads in part as follows:

... We are here at Keams Canyon School now. I am back to work in the bakery again. I sure like to be with so many little children... and I always wonder if all these young souls could only

know the true gospel, it will be a great help to our tribe. Yes. We always talk about your nice visit to us at Sand Hills. There isn't very much to see up there, but I think that my father has been led by a great spirit, to find a spring and a good home, and have more freedom to pray to his true God. I could see him when I shut my eyes, kneeling down on top of those sand hills and praying to our great Father in heaven. ... I surely would like to talk and tell the people all about my father's conversion, how he fine the true gospel. ...

My father was telling me a story at the sheep camp by a fireplace in the winter as we were setting by a fireplace, while he was sewing my sheep skin over shoes, he said, "My beloved Son, you are the youngest son of mine. I'll tell you a story about my life and other people. You must remember this and try to live up to it. But remember, Son, this is not for yourself. As I have said before, there are other people who cannot see and hear. If you live right and pray you might lead them and tell them about it. Give them a drink when they ask for it. Yes, Son, I have travel a lots of time out in country. Far off to the other tribe to trade our goods. Many times I have gone alone out in the wilderness, where there is no roads or where to fine the spring and food when I need it. Oh my Son you must listen good. Our great spirit Father in heaven is guiding me. I pray when I am thirsty, I pray when I am lost and when I need food I pray. All are answer when you believe in him. You don't know yet Son, what I am talking about. But you must remember and pray for it, you'll fine it. The right one will come to you and you'll know it, my Son.

"There will be lots of white people. They will all look alike when you see them, all white. But, my Son, there heart is not alike, so you must be very careful in finding the right one. I have fine the true gospel so you must try and fine the same one my Son, the Mormons. They got the true record of our people. But they are coming slow. But they will be here. You'll see them and hear them when they come. You'll know them by name (Mormon) so my Son, wait for the Mormons. They got the true gospel of our great spirit Father in heaven. Pray for it so you'll fine the right one."

At his death bed I was setting beside his bed and he hold out his hands and said, "My Son, I am leaving you. Remember what I have told you. Wait for the Mormon. Look, Son, there is the man coming down to take me home. Look. There is the cross above me. Be a good boy, Son, be brave and be true to our true living God. Good-bye." And he is gone.

Oh yes, he told me that he first meet the missionaries around Tuba City and later on he said they went up to Salt Lake City to buy a horse with his brother, and thats the time he said he was been baptized. He did not said where he was been baptized. Only name that I remember was Jacob.

And then Vinton tells his own little story, briefly:

When I was about eight years old I start to heard sheep, and from that time on I have learned lots about God's work. I was a lonely boy. My brothers and sisters were big. When my father died in 1911 I was left alone with my mother, and she also encourage me to remember my father's last words—told me to live right and pray morning and evening so I keep it up. But sometimes I think of myself if I was worth to God, then with a humble heart I look toward east where Sun rises. I would then



A group of conference visitors from Spokane, Washington.

SPENCER W. KIMBALL

think of the day that would come for me to meet the right true gospel. In 1913 I was able to read and write. I went to Baptizes [Baptist] Church. I got hold of the Holy Bible and I sure did study it. But still it was not enough of the story that my father had told me. In my mind (the Mormons) so in 1915 I went to Santa Fe to school and there I found out about the Catlices [Catholics] I sure want to go to there church so I did and I have found that it was not the kind that my father had told me about it, so that Sunday night I ask our God what to do. I though [thought] that I was lost. The next week Sunday they told me to go to church, but I stand alone there in the hole [whole] crowd. I don't know which way to go, so I did not go to church for about a month. The school boy use to call me divil [devil] because I didn't want to go to church. . . .

I have waited about 20 years before I have found the true gospel. . . . Well, brother, I'll try and tell you . . . all about my father's life . . . and also my own hard traveling and looking for the true gospel which at last I have fine, and now I am feeling very happy. . . .

I wish I would be up there with you during the general conference. Well, we all send our love to our brothers and sisters. We remain as true to gospel,

From Polacca family
Vinton L. Polacca.

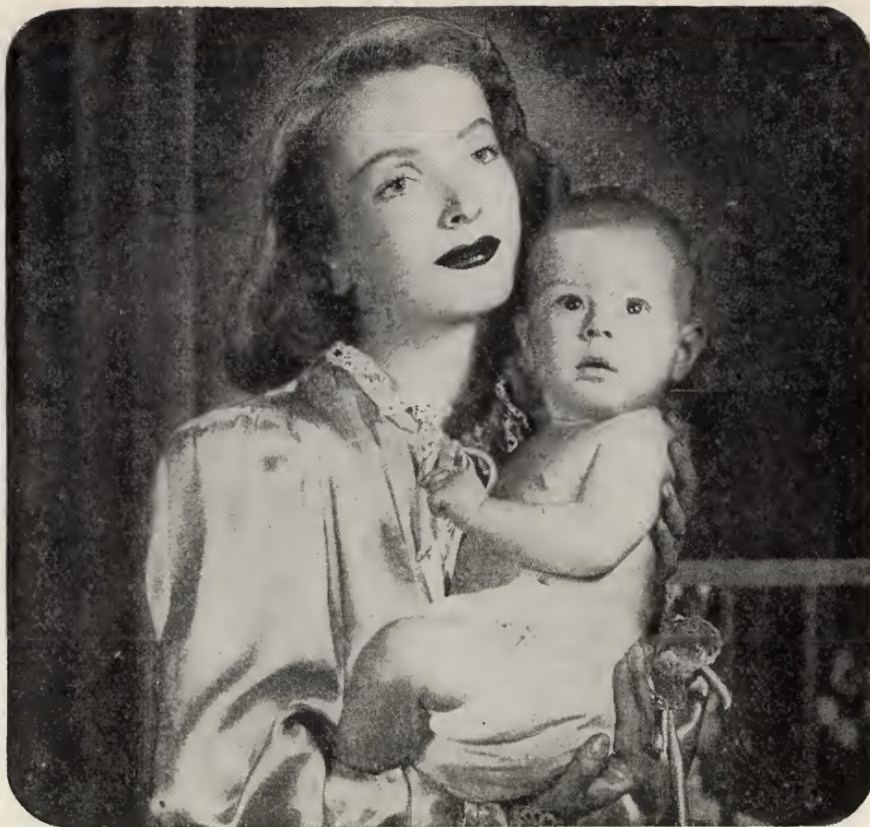
Brothers and sisters, in conclusion may I say that we owe a great debt to these people which we can only pay by giving to them the gospel and the many advantages and opportunities which we enjoy. They are a warm-hearted and devoted people. They believe without skepticism. They have a simple, childlike faith which admits of no cheap rationalization.

The Lamanites must rise in majesty and power. We must look forward to the day when they will be "white and delightsome," sharing the freedoms and blessings which we enjoy; when they shall have economic security, culture, refinement, and education; when they shall be operating farms and businesses and industries and shall be occupied in the professions and in teaching; when they shall be organized into wards and stakes of Zion, furnishing much of their own leadership; when they shall build and occupy and fill the temples, and serving in them as are the natives now in the Hawaiian Temple where I found last year the entire service conducted by them and done perfectly. And in the day when their prophet shall come, one shall rise

. . . mighty among them . . . being an instrument in the hands of God, with exceeding faith, to work mighty wonders. . . . (II Nephi 3:24.)

Brothers and sisters, the florescence of the Lamanites is in our hands. May we not fail them, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

NOVEMBER 1947



If you could have one wish

WHAT would you wish for your baby? Fame? . . . Fortune? . . . Perhaps! But surely your first wish would be that he grow tall and strong; that he have the kind of security that comes from vigorous health. And it's so easy for you to help make that wish come true!

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