

Bristol Conference 1976-18 Studies in the Judges

by Bob Clark

The sermon explores the themes of oppression, deliverance, and spiritual victory through the life of Samson, highlighting the importance of seeking divine instruction and guidance in our responsibilities.

Duration: 41:05

Scripture: Judges 13:5-14, Romans 12:1

Topics: "Bible Conference"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of Samson from the Bible. He emphasizes the importance of being open to the lessons taught by the Spirit of God and allowing them to impact our lives. The preacher expresses gratitude for the opportunity to share God's Word and the refreshing and penetrating way it was ministered to the audience. He highlights the characteristics of Samson's life, including his opposition and whether or not he was moved by the Spirit of God, and encourages the audience to learn from these lessons. The sermon also explores the background of Samson's birth and his first experience of having a relationship with God.

Transcript

Queen of the stars, good day, I'm redeemed, I'm redeemed, From all that sorrow that man is to bear, I have been redeemed. I'm redeemed by love divine, glory, glory, righteousness, I now resign, I have been redeemed. I'm redeemed, I'm redeemed, I'm redeemed, I'm redeemed, I'm redeemed by love divine, I have been redeemed.

Since I started, since my sweetheart is dead, He's sweeter than he's ever been, A sweeter being. What have you done recently for one of your elders? I hope that you minister to them in some fashion they have ministered to you, and one way that you might be a real help to them is to put into their hands one of these two books, Battle for the Bible, or The Lord of the Churches. Both of these books will give them food for their souls, something to read of, something to refresh their own spirit, and they're really nominal in price.

You might have a young fellow in your local church that's interested in the assemblies of God's people and concerned about their growth, and it would be very good that they would have put into their hands, and they would consider your little consideration and the \$3 investment, although they won't know that that's what the price is, and you can put The Lord of the Churches into their hands and have a double effect,

give them something special, not only a signed copy by Mr. Davies, but there's a little chart in the front page on the Book of Revelation in the seven letters, but there's an extra little study material. These two books and others are over at the bookstore. You really should make a little bit of an investment in some of the volumes that are here, not only that our brother doesn't have so much to carry home, but that you begin to have a ministry and a joy of giving to some others.

Not just for your own library, but take something home to give to those that are interested and concerned and must encourage them to get some good spiritual food under their belt. Won't you do that? The facts of the Bible will be excellent for some of your more mature Christians and those that are interested or concerned in the welfare of the truth of God's Word and the preserving of it amongst God's people. Look at Judges Chapter 13.

Judges Chapter 13, 14, and 15 afford for us the view of the 12th Judge, but not the Lance Judge. Due to your attention on the very first opportunity, this word is used rather specially in this particular area of the Word of God, and although in other places when the same word, Judge, is used, it has reference to discerning good and bad. But through the Book of Judges, and through the first two people in the Book of Samuel, Eli and Samuel, it is used in reference to a deliverer, one who is overruling, guiding, and providing for God's people.

And, once again, like when we say the word Reformation, you think of the Reformers, but a period of time. So, from now on, I trust that when we think of the Judges, we do not merely think of the Book, but rather a period of time in the nation's history that was at a low ebb, necessitating the raising up of a king, and God ultimately bringing in His chosen king, suggestive of the time in which we live just prior to the coming of our blessed Lord. Judges 13, 14, 15, and 16 carry for us information regarding the life of Samson, and our little chart that we have suggested might be of some point of interest, not meant to be an interpretation, but an application of the clues that are seen.

We see Samson coming in at the end of the church period, just prior to the coming of the Lord. Some of his characteristics, the enemy that he fights against, the fact that he never actually triumphs over the enemy. The enemy lingers, and the one who triumphs is the king that comes, David.

And, of course, in fulfillment, our blessed Lord is alone the one who will be able to straighten out what is suggested by the Philistine domination. The last two sections, chapters 17 to the end of the book, afford for us two very sad circumstances. Once, at Paul's priesthood in chapters 17 and 18, chapter 19 through the end, introduces to us the perverted judgment.

Great civil war, impure ideas, inconsistency amongst God's people. No doubt the incidences themselves happened earlier, but are comical at the end of the book to show the devastation effect and the low ebb of the nation. They end up in a violent civil war, more concerned over the dignity of a woman than God's honor.

It's a sad, confusing, and almost, for some sensitive consciences, a really repulsive story, and yet it's been carefully preserved for us to see the very sad circumstance that characterized the end of this book, and the reason why the people were clamoring for leadership and a rule. Unfortunately, they wanted a king rather than God's control and submission to the unseen rule and leadership of the Lord. The oppression, the seventh oppression on the nation of Israel given to us in this book, is given in chapter 13, verse 1. The children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Philistines forty years.

It is the longest oppression to which God's people are submitted in this book. We are introduced here to a new enemy. They have been mentioned indirectly.

By this time, they have thoroughly emigrated out of Egypt, have permeated the southern part of the land, and are gradually crowned in many different areas in the whole southern section of the land. They have five cities and five lords that rule those basic cities that constitute their dominion. Their scheme or pattern was an infiltration of the land.

It was not a direct attack as such, but gradually an overrunning and a permeation of the land, and gradually getting more and more control. This subtle form suggests to us professions of Christianity which is more evident after the Reformation in these later years. They were not out of Egypt by way of the shed blood of the Passover or going through the Red Sea.

They came out as emigrants, moved into the land, and might be what is suggested by our Lord as those that are sown, the seed that is sown, the children of the devil, that will not be extricated until the Son of Man comes and removes, takes the true harvest, and removes all that chaos. They suggest a profession of Christianity that we face, and feature the Philistine history that are constantly in opposition to God's people. They seem to be almost doggedly, belligerently just parroting, you know.

Even, for example, in the time of Isaac, it meant just filling up the wells that he brought. Just parroting, contention, division, and strife. There they are permeating and controlling the land.

Scripture gives only the name of Palestine to the Holy Land when it speaks of judgment. The word Palestine comes from this Philistine rule. It's the longest oppression, 40 years, and there will be no deliverance either by Samson nor any until the coming of the king.

And there is no deliverance from profession of Christianity. The church is filled, the professing church, the kingdom if we could call it in a broader sense, is filled with those that profess faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord promised that circumstance to be so.

That will not be corrected until he himself returns and removes those that are his own, and then comes back to make a discerning judgment in his kingdom. Israel has been crushed by 40 years of oppression. There is no cry on the part of the people for a deliverer.

Raising up of Samson is a sovereign act of God. He ultimately must come in and prepare in his way to bring a deliverer in. It shows remarkable interest and concern in God's people.

There was a certain man of Gorah, a family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah, and his wife was barren and bare not. The angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman and said unto her, Behold, now thou art barren, and barest not, but thou shalt conceive and bear a son. Now, therefore, beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine, nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean things.

Lo, thou shalt conceive and bear a son, and no razor shall come on his head, for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb, and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hands of the Philistines. Before we look at this portion, I'd like to draw to your attention two or three characteristics, and then we'll come back to this particular paragraph and what follows. This is a lengthy portion, and we could not do justice to his whole life.

You might like to make a chart sometime on the upper left-hand side of your chart, and a paragraph heading, and then a second column of content, and a third column the opposition, and whether or not he was moved by the Spirit of God, and a lesson to be learned. Six columns across, and then read through his life, and you'll find out that his life very easily breaks into paragraphs, into experiences, obvious relationships, good and bad, and where there is much to glean just from your own experience. We mustn't overlook that in chapter 14, verse 1, Samson goes down to Timnath, a city amongst the Philistines, and saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines.

He came up and told his father and his mother, and he said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines. Now, therefore, get her for me to wife. At the end of verse 3, get her for me, he reaffirms to his father, for she pleases me well.

The lust of the eyes. In chapter 16, in verse 1, Samson went to Gaza and saw there a harlot, and went in unto her. The lust of the flesh.

Verse 4, and it came to pass afterwards that he loved a woman in the valley of Thorek, whose name was Elilah, the pride of life. You can see how these threefold enemies, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, are illustrated by these three women in this man's life. The first two are passive, objects of his attention and interest, and his own self-indulgence.

The third is an aggressive, satanic attack upon God's servants because of his own indulgence and his own arrogant pride in his relationship with this woman. A sad pitfall for this man. Lessons to be learned by all of us.

These things are not to be relegated merely to the sins of manhood, but they come in similar forms to others as well. We need to be aware of fulfilling the desires of the body and of the mind. This is truly the lust of the flesh.

Now, in chapter 15, after a great battle, we find the first time that we have a record that Samson has a personal relationship to God. In chapter 15, in verse 18, after a tremendous battle where he slew thousands, he saw a thirst and he called on the Lord and said, Thou hast given this great indifference unto the hand of thy servant, and now shall I die for thirst and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised. But God craved a hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout.

When he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived. Wherefore he called the name thereof, Hankara, which is in Lehi, unto this day. And he judged Israel in those days to the Philippines twenty years.

Twenty years were this man's ministration that some way allayed the opposition to the coming of the king, to the true deliverer. He carried on in some way faithfully, but this is his first experience in a relationship with God, and when he comes to the end of himself and his physical strength, which was his personal strength, he knew it well, he tried it himself in, but when he came to the end of himself after a conflict, and in fatigue he raised his voice and he called upon the Lord. It's the first record of having any spiritual or social intercourse with God.

I wonder how many of us have spent long periods of time seeking to serve the Lord without personal relationship with him. Samson may be at his spiritual height at this little period where he acknowledges his weakness, his utter dependence, and in fatigue and tiredness he calls upon God, and God graciously calls

a great spring of water to come up miraculously and to provide refreshment and nourishment, and thus it becomes a significant product, the place of the core spring. I trust that you have sometime in your life known what it is to come to the end of your own self, and find the necessary physical or emotional or spiritual fatigue, and have learned to kneel down in your bedroom or your office or your car or wherever you are into a sanctuary of silent communion with God, and learn that God can refresh you.

Inner strength dwelling up within, even though you're in the desert, you can sing unto the Lord and realize that God wants you to acknowledge your weakness. The moment you and I are weak, then he can become strong. That's a familiar thing in this world, that in his weakness there is strength.

The second that is recorded, and the last time it happens in the end of chapter 16, he has been blinded, he has been humiliated and shamed, stripped of his dignity and his usefulness to God, he becomes scorned and mockery for the enemy. Verse 28, And Samson called unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, remember me! I prayed, and blented me, I prayed, only this once, O God, that I may at once avenge the Philistines for my two eyes. Then Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, the one with its right hand, and the other with its left.

Samson then let me die with the Philistines, and he bowed himself with all his might, and the house fell upon the Lord and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he flew with his death were more than they which he flew with his life. Chapter 16, verse 31, and the very last phrase, He judged Israel for twenty years.

In the end of the preceding chapter, to hear everything in the end of the scene, he accomplished nothing for God, and God just reminds him that he did judge Israel for twenty years. He died in shame for his death was a spiritual victory, a practical victory over his enemies, and I think that many of us, in some way at least, have been taught, whether we understand it in our personal experience or not, that it is in our death, the death of our old man, and a sense of our having been crucified with Christ, that we ourselves would pass that judicial sentence against ourselves. So, that's what crucifixion is.

Crucifixion is not synonymous with death. Crucifixion is condemnation that issues in death, judicial condemnation that issues in death. Our Lord Jesus and two men on either side of him were crucified, but they were quite alive, and the crucifixion never took our Lord's might.

He voluntarily, by a sovereign act, dismissed his fury. So, crucifixion is a condemning judicial sentence against ourselves, and it's a great blessing when, once at the end of his life, he can pass this and say, Lord, let me die. Now, he's crucified.

We should be spiritual. Call on the Lord in our weakness, find him to be our sustaining strength, and then call on him afresh, and say, Lord, let me die. Put an end to God's harm, and allow thy eternal spirit to create Christ within, and allow him to flow through.

But, this all comes about in the whole narrative, in all the foundable mentions, because of a remarkable, divine appointed call on the part of God. When I interviewed Jessica East, I would like to mention a few very simple, practical illustrations to show how this might come in, and it's great importance for you and me. Here's a woman who has never been crucified.

Here's a woman who has never born a child. Here is a man separated from his wife. She remains anonymous.

God knows who she is. The head of this household, the knower, is named. I want you to follow their actions and their relationship together.

You want to depart from the study of the book of Judges as such, and gather something very simple, something very pertinent, to those of us who are married, and those of us who at some time think that we might like to enter into this very noble and profitable, but sometimes tiny, human relationship. The woman came and told her husband, please remember now, the very unsophisticated life you're seen with, the very modest, simple form. Here is a woman who has been out in the field somewhere, and a man has come to her and said, you're going to be pregnant, you're going to bear a child, and this is what I want you to do.

Rather than keeping this to herself, rather than having apprehension or doubt or questioning, she has a very open relationship with her husband. She has no fear that he is going to hold her upset. What does the husband feel like? He comes back, they have never had a child, this is a logical desire, and then she comes in and says, well, I've been out in the field, and I met a man, and I'm going to have a baby.

There is much room for suspicion, evil thoughts, innuendo, doubt in the relationship together. But, there is a spiritual health between this man and this woman, a confidence, and a mutual trust that is tremendous enough to keep it off. A man of God came unto me, and his countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible.

For I asked him not whence he was, neither told me his name. But he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt receive the bearer's son, and thou shalt drink no wine or strong drink, neither any unclean thing that a child should bear, and thou shalt rise to God from the womb to the day of his death. All of Manoah's answers, doubt, questioning, enigma, accusation.

Then Manoah entreated the Lord, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again, that I might check on this very self, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born. Father sent a remarkable disposition into Grant. Although his wife had received the divine revelation, although she is to be the vehicle, and she is to be the one blessed, he immediately enters into his responsibility, which is, what shall we do to train this child? When you cradle that little one in your arms, did you carefully raise your heart to God, and say, What shall I do to train this child? Or was it possible that you weren't even there? Have you ever assumed responsibility for the raising, and the training, and the guiding of your children? I have no doubt that at the judgment seat that I shall be deeply responsible for my family, for the weaknesses, for the frailties, for the ineffectualness, for some of the hurts and wounds, for some of the carelessness.

I know that I am responsible for those eternal souls, my wife and my children, and at the judgment seat, I must be answerable for them, as of March, not in totality, for their adult lives, but in some measure, the word of God makes it abundantly clear. Being a father and a husband is plated with deepening responsibilities in a perverted, sinned curse, and flesh-entertaining world in which we live, and it means that we must keep a vigil upon ourselves and our loved ones, and his immediate answer is to turn back to God and entreat him, Lord, give us divine instruction. What shall we do to teach this choice? And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah, and the angel of God came again unto the woman, and she sat in the field, but Manoah her husband was not with her.

Now, note that carelessness. Obviously, it is Manoah's wife who is the fetus open and sick for divine revelation. She is the one that God has chosen.

She is the one, apparently, if we read the story aright, that is in some way sick, whether for God's choice or by her own attitude or disposition, she receives the instruction. She is the one that is communicated with. It is she that is the object of fellowship and communion with God, and we can see shortly she is the one that is divinely instructed, much more of a spiritual angel.

But, nonetheless, there is a remarkable balance in this family youth, and it is this family that God has chosen to raise up and deliver for the nation of Israel. Whatever Samson turns out to be, it's not to be laid upon the shoulders of this man and woman. God has chosen this family, and they shall be the ones to bring this shining one, for that is what Samson's name means.

In faith, they say, he will be the shining demigod for the nation of Israel. The angel comes again to the woman, but Manoah her husband was not with her, because God did not know that person. So, he chose this, that we might learn, and the woman made eight, and ran and showed her husband.

And said of him, Behold, a man has appeared unto me. Talk! Now, she doesn't sit and get everything that she can, and says to herself, Well, where are the Noah's impacts in the shop today? Have I got something to sell him? That's not a disposition. She tries to hold him in her insight or understanding.

She wants to share with him. She recognizes and accepts in her role, and you shall see immediately that Manoah is very balanced, very mature. There's many a Christian man that resents his wife's time spent in Bible study.

He has to spend the time at work, have on the road, eat some snacks. She wants to share something with him, and he tastes a little bit. Oh, you don't do well, Henry.

But it's a little something of an offense for our ego. We feel like we should be the ones that know. Why should she be teaching me? I can't allow her to know that she's instructing me.

I will look kind of disinterested. Why? Because we have some kind of a veneer, self-protection. In reality, the ego is a lack of humility.

We'll say it's self-protection. And you just cannot receive from that weaker vessel that which is hers to give to us, which she wants to share. And your very capacity to acknowledge, dear, I never knew that.

Oh, thank you for that insight. That will weld your relationship. Instead, you continue to read the paper in apparent disinterest, and you have ruptured a cozy bond.

You're breaking the very thing that you want to say. So, acknowledging weakness is not to be weak. It's to strengthen your tie with your loved one.

To be able to receive from her the demonstration that she can give. She runs, and agents destroy him, and Noah arose, typed with his wife, and came to the man and said, Are you the man that spoke to my wife? I am. Now let thy words come to pass.

How shall we order the child, and how shall we do unto him? Do you see his concern? He wants his child to be raised for God. Father, bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Husbands, we need to love our wives.

Act officially here for a woman in your life, for when Christ may be made official for you. Self-sacrifice to him. Support him.

Fortune and friendship by the word of God. That's the ministration that is out in Ephesians 5. That's our side of the relationship. Raising and cleansing, nourishing, bringing up life, cherishing, protecting, hovering over your mother and your children.

That way of suffering and sustaining will cultivate within that mature woman's spirit and soul the willingness to abandon herself to you and to be able to fulfill God's command to her, which is so typical for her. The most typical thing for a woman to do is to submit to you. Because she knows you too well.

But she's urged to do it as a civil lawyer. But how much more comfortable and how charmingly delightful it is when she can do it in response to the vigilant love. It makes no difference what her attitude is to you.

It makes absolutely nowhere different whether she receives your love and attentiveness and care. You have chosen this woman. You have committed yourself to her.

And now, until the day the Lord breaks that union, you are to love and care and cherish and nourish and give of yourself. And thus be preparing yourself for the noblest of servants. To be an overseer and treat with godly maturity nearer the end of your life and be a true elder and shepherd God's people.

You have learned much through raising your own family. Now you turn to the sheep, to the family of God. Manoah is glad to see his responsibility.

And, of course, now he wants to respond in some way. He wants to come back and give to the man. Let me give you a present.

Oh, no, I'm sorry. What's your name, anyway? The angel says in verse 18, Why ask that thou hast not my name, seeing it is wonderful and secret enough to be known? Manoah is such a kid with a neat offering, an offering upon the rock unto the Lord. Relationship with God produces worshippers.

Relationship with God produces worshippers. His desire to give back to God. He offered it upon a rock unto the Lord, and the angel did wondrously, and Manoah and his wife looked on.

It came to pass when the flame was upward toward heaven from off the altar, the angel of the Lord ascended into the flame of the altar, and Manoah and his wife looked on it and fell on their faces to the ground. But the angel of the Lord did no more appear to Manoah. Then Manoah knew that he was an angel of the Lord.

And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die because we have seen God. But his wife said unto him, If the Lord were pleased to kill us, we would not have received any burnt offering and a neat offering at our hands. Neither would he have showed us all these things, nor would he at this time have told us such things as these.

Spiritual instruction. Insight into God's healing. Thank the Lord if you have a godly spiritual one.

And if not, pray and ask the Lord that you might be given grace to be able to continue to minister to her, and through the use of the word of God, create a spiritual atmosphere that will give her the desire to be what she should be to you in the spiritual realm, as well as the physical. Jeremiah and Paul both had a deep sense of having been called by God to the service of God before their birth. The apostle said, While I was in my mother's womb, it pleased God to call me to separate me from his house.

Jeremiah listened to the Lord speak to him in chapter 1, giving us an insight into what divine knowledge means. God says, I knew you before you were born, and I ordained you to serve me and go to the meeting. An astounding thing, isn't it? And here Sam, at any time in his life, could look back and surely know that God had singled him out to serve the living God, and divine empowering was his.

Young fellas and girls, those of you who honestly have some care for this eternal, it is of profound importance that you recognize that somehow, in his greatest love, God has chosen you to be his own. And he has singled you out, and has now walked worthy of that cause, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. All think of the treasured blessing and enrichment that is yours, like great men of old have sinned, like any who has ever found their heart to serve God, a deep, crushing awareness that God is full, and young fellas, he wants you.

And he'll do what he is able to, proportionate to the degree to which you will surrender to be what you should be. Samson was separated by God, even in his mother's womb. Young girl, what you do today will affect a child of your parents.

Clarence didn't know that, surely. But God did. He said it early in all the scriptures in the Levitical lore.

And he reaffirms it here. What you do with your life, and what you're taking to your body, will affect that little eternal plane that will be carried by you and brought into life. The family unit is of tremendous importance.

The marital relationship is consummated and brings great pleasure and joy. And out of that love comes an eternal vehicle to be set aside for God. And the early you feel that, and sense that appointment, accepts the great dignity of God's holy call, I argue none of that is your theology.

It's just the revelation of God's word. Young Halloween girl, God has called you for himself, and he has separated you to himself. And I have a deep condition in my soul.

Some of you, even now, feel the pressure in your life that God has been speaking to you. You know you have faculties and equipment, you have body, personality, warmth, thought, and spiritual gifts of the Spirit to yield to God. Will you squander it like Samson? Will you eternally go on with your life just indulging what you want? And he looked, and he looked, and said, Get her for me, he pleaded with me.

Is that the way you shall wait, surely? No, I think not. You are going to respond to the tender ruling of the Spirit, and acknowledge that there is a great will of God for you. Good work! And God has our saying that you should walk it.

Won't you seek them out in Holy Scripture? Won't you respond with your devotion and heart? Won't you be among those that will deliver God's people from the Philistines? The false profession, the rank hypocrisy of the initial realm. If you too will have a sense of separation and identification with the Lord, Samson would not drink elementary things. Wine, fruit juice, raisins, grapes.

He let his hair grow long. It was an external testimony that he was identified with God, separated to God. There will be those that might not want your fellowship.

That's all right, you go on with him, and he'll provide the kind of fellowship and companionship and provision for you. Dear young folks, you've sat under the sound of God's word for a whole week. You've been in the fellowship of God's people and enjoyed it.

Many of you have not really missed the world at all. Some of you have been here for two weeks. You know that you need to answer to God's call.

He has drawn you to himself. Humbly, simply, Jeremiah would reason with God and say, Oh, I'm a child, I can't help. And God says, Don't say that, I'll be everything that you need.

Just yield yourself to me. I have sent and only served the Lord. He said it himself.

When he called on the Lord, he found repression. When he called on the Lord, he ultimately died. In getting his life, he became a deliverer.

But you can start now, and anticipate that your marital relationship, if you do have that privilege and the Lord has allowed, will be one of such warm balance, the acceptance of your partner, the valuing of his and her qualities, that you shall turn out to be a full, mature unit, ready to be blessed with God and used again. For those of us who are a little older, and ones who are never too late, for you or me, to form our lives in submission to what's suggested here, and to the word of God. The delightful relationship between Manoaah and his wife, Samson, at every opportunity, I pray that some of these lessons will be waken by the spirit of God, and press upon our conscience in all their simplicity, and that even now, in these quiet moments, you might resolve to present yourself once for all to God, a living sacrifice.

After all, it is that intelligent, mental sacrifice of worship that you can give to God, and if it's in response to the word of God, motivated by the Holy Spirit, you shall surely find a good and perfect and incessant will of God. I want to thank you very much for your warm reception. Allowing me to share God's word with you, and a real pleasure for me to be here.

Physical rest and activity, and the opportunity to hear God's word ministered so refreshingly in a penetrating and a swallowing way by our brother, and a blessing from my soul. And I trust that you carry home with you much that will change your life, and that together we might serve our blessed Lord Jesus Christ.

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