

THE BIBLE TEACHER

Vol. 2.

No. 10.



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F R E E



Published by

CHURCH OF CHRIST

C-22, SOUTH EXTENSION-2

NEW DELHI-49. (India)

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How is your hearing ?

You might conclude that this question is dealing with one's physical hearing but you would be wrong. Rather, I am asking this question to lay stress on the importance of *what* one hears. Do you realize how necessary it is for you to hear the right thing ? Just think about this : Since what you hear will more than likely determine what you believe then it means that if you are to believe the truth, you must hear the truth. On the other hand, if you hear a lie then you will in most probability believe a lie. It is just that simple.

For the most part, then, we are what we see, hear, understand, and accept. And it is just as easy for us to believe a lie as it is to believe the truth, if we accept that which we hear as fact and do not investigate its genuineness.

Why are there so many conflicting doctrines accepted in the name of religion ? Why do so many people feel that one church is as good as another ? Why are so many religious names and titles worn in the name of Christ ? Why is there so much division ? All of these questions can be answered with the same answer : Simply because the majority of people have been taught these things as truth, and they have accepted them as truth without ever investigating their soundness. In other words, they are what they believe, and they believe what they do simply because they were taught that.

If we want to be *right* in religion then we must be sure that we hear the truth instead of error, that we put our trust in God rather than in man. This means that we must read and study our Bible and be sure that we know exactly what the Lord would have us to do and then be certain that we believe it and that we comply with it accordingly. True faith comes from hearing the word of God. (Romans 10 : 17).

And salvation comes from obeying the commands of Christ. (Hebrews 5 : 8, 9 ; Mark 16 : 16):

There is but *one* truth, and that truth makes us free. (John 17 : 17 ; John 8 : 32). Furthermore, all who come to hear the truth, if they will accept it, will believe that same truth. Further, if they all obey that same truth, they will all be the same thing religiously. Those who are otherwise are what they are because they have believed and obeyed error.

There is also a great responsibility placed on us to *teach* the pure word of God, realizing again that those who hear us may believe what we teach. Remember, if they are taught the truth then they may believe and obey the truth, but if they are taught error then they may believe and obey error. This is why Jesus not only commanded us to teach, but also told us exactly what to teach. (Matthew 28 : 19,20 ; Mark 16 : 15,16 ; 2 Timothy 4 : 2).

It just stands to reason then that the more truth we can give to the world, the more of the world will believe that truth. But what about you as an individual? Have you thought about what you are being taught? Do you give any real thought to what you hear? Let me beg of you to listen carefully, to study deeply, to investigate, to compare, to question, and to be sure that what you believe is the truth and nothing but the truth. Only then can you be saved. Yes, what you hear can determine your final destiny. Take heed how you hear !

ASSOCIATE EDITORIAL

After death, what ?

Though multitudes of people avoid deliberately any thought of death, some refuse to discuss it because it brings to them sorrow and fear. But everyone of us know that just as sure as we are living today, just that sure we will have to die some day. The word *death* comes as a shock to one who hears it. We spend our money, time and whatever we can do to save our dying friends and relatives. But the fact remains that all of us will have to die one day. Now the question is, what happens after one dies ?

Many people have thought that life ends with our physical death. But not so. In fact, death marks separation between our body and soul, but it then provides the entrance from time into eternity. Our physical death marks the beginning of our eternal life.

There are those who teach that after death our souls enter into purgatory, that is, after one dies his soul enters into a place or state of burning torment in which souls are after death purified from sins. In this place the soul is supposed to be tortured in various ways until all sins are removed completely.

Some people hold the idea of Punar-Janma, or reincarnation. They believe in a cycle of death and rebirth, and this may include many deaths and rebirths for a soul. It is said that after a person dies he comes again into this world, and this time not necessarily as a human being but may be born as an animal. According to them, to escape this cycle of death and rebirth one must perform some certain things in his present life such as yoga or good works through which one is said to be passed into nirvana (saving state).

But the question is, what is the truth? Can we really know what happens after death? Since no one ever returned after death to tell about this mysterious question, for our reliable information we must turn to a trusted book. God has given this book, the Bible, to men and it is the final authority of all the truth. The Bible clearly reveals the mysteries surrounding the life to come so that we need not be ignorant about our future.

The Bible teaches, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Hebrews 9 : 27). Thus it is fixed by God, the Creator, that every person should die once and that after death he must face the judgment which God will execute upon all people through his Son Jesus Christ. (John 12 : 48 ; John 5 : 22 ; Acts 17 : 31). Again the Bible says that no one can escape the judgment : "For we MUST all appear before the judgment seat of Christ ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Corinthians 5: 10). Also read Romans 14 : 10 and Revelation 20 : 13.

In Luke 16 : 19-31 Jesus Christ told a story which in fact is not a parable but a true account of two men who lived upon the earth and died. In this story first we are introduced to a rich man who is described as dressed in purple and the finest of linen cloth, a very expensive material of Jesus' day. Evidently he was ostentatious, proud of his material wealth, and greedy. His god was his wealth who ruled over his life. He is numbered among those who upon the great day of judgment will stand on the left hand of the judge. (Read Matthew 25 : 41-46).

Next we are introduced to a man named Lazarus who was a beggar. Jesus, in this story, mentioned that Lazarus' body was so covered with the sores that even street dogs used to come to lick his ulcers. He was taken to the rich man's gate, with the intention of begging and to satisfy his hunger with the scraps which fell from the rich man's table, which shows

his utterly poor condition and humility in which no human being cared for him.

Then the Lord, the narrator, said the poor man died and the rich man also died. Now, what happens? He indicates a division of destination between these two men. The beggar is carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom—into the immediate presence of the patriarch. On the other hand, the rich man finds himself in the torment of hell. The record says, "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed; so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." (Luke 16:23:26).

In fact, the rich man never really thought of what would happen after death. He perhaps believed that there was no life beyond the grave or else he would have been concerned about it. He was like the rich fool of whom we read in Luke 12:16-20 who had riches so abundant that he had no place to store them and instead of sharing them with the needy around him he began to plan where he should store his riches for the future. But he did not know that the very same night his life was to be taken. And the Lord said to him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be, which thou has provided?" Oh, what a sad picture of this rich but foolish man!

The inference is that God is the controller of the lives of all persons. When he says that a man's soul is required by

him, that is the end of this *earthly* life. But not the end of life, of the life to follow, which begins after our physical death. All have to die but once. All must appear before the judgment seat of Christ. All will be judged according to their deeds. And all must spend eternity somewhere, i.e., either in heaven or hell. Speaking of the unrighteous people, the Lord said, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment : but the righteous into life eternal." (Matthew 25:46).

Friends, although it is appointed unto men once to die, you can die two kinds of death. You can either die the death of the righteous or the death of the unrighteous. David said that all God's commandments are righteousness. (Psalms 119:172). Thus you can die the death of the righteous by doing the commandments of the Lord. (Matthew 7:21 ; Matthew 28:19,20 ; Mark 16:16 ; Revelation 2:10).

Solomon, who is known for his wisdom, came to the conclusion in his old age that all is vanity and that the whole duty of man is to : "Fear God and keep his commandments." (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

God's Purpose As Seen In The Cross

By J. W. Roberts

"If God is for us, who is against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:31-32).

There is nothing which points out the divine purpose of God for mankind like the fact that God delivered Jesus up to the cross for the salvation of man. There is nothing which can give perspective and reality to a human life like seeing that life and its meaning in the light of the cross. Man can glory or boast in many things, in his family back-

ground and heritage, in his success, in his money, in the esteem which others hold for him, or in his fame. These are all good, but they are fleeting and often unsatisfying. It is only when one sees that what really gives him dignity and worth is the fact that God loved him enough that he gave his own blessed Son to die in his stead. This is what Paul must have meant when he said, "Far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Galatians 6:14).

But if we ask why was such a sacrifice in our behalf necessary? The answer has many angles. It is tied up with what is termed the atonement.

In the last analysis, sin is the cause—not just sin in general but *our* sin: my sin and yours. If we are honest, we must admit the fact of our mistakes and wrongdoings. But did *these* sins have anything to do with Jesus' death two thousand years ago? Not immediately, but still they are the same sins as those of the ones who condemned Jesus and nailed him to the cross. Nor did he just die for their sins—he loved and died for the whole world (John 3:16).

But "everybody sins," so why was it so bad that Christ must die? Because God is both a loving and a just or righteous God. If he overlooked sin in one man, he must do so in all: if he overlooks all sin, he is not just, and there is no moral order in our universe (like a town without police and courts). God cannot overlook sin; the "wages of the is death" (Romans 6:23). This death is not our physical death (we owe that to Adam's sin—Romans 5:12) but spiritual death—eternal doom. To save us from *this* God delivered up his Son. Here we see God's purpose in the cross.

Seeing beyond the Grave

But there are other factors. Sin had brought death to our world and until the cross men could not see beyond

the grave—the fear of death hold them in bondage. Thus Christ became one with us in the flesh to deliver us “who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Hebrews 2:15). He thus destroyed the power of the devil over the hearts of men. In dying and rising he assured our resurrection, “bringing life and immortality to light” (2 Timothy 1:10).

To Paul the victory of Christ was absolute and complete. At the word that demons were subject to the disciples through Jesus' name Christ said, “I beheld Satan falling as lightning from heaven” (Luke 10:18). Even the angels and evil spirits which held the world enthralled and controlled the powers and rulers of the world under the power of Satan yielded sway to the power of Jesus in his death and resurrection (Ephesians 6:12; Colossians 2:15). Ours is the victory through Jesus' death.

This centering of the purpose of God in the cross of Jesus is foolishness to the world; and to the Jew, who expected a different Messiah, it was a stumblingblock; but to those who believe, the preaching of the cross is the power of God unto salvation (1 Corinthians 1:21). So Paul not only preached Christ crucified; he refused to know anything else.

This is how life can have purpose and meaning. It can become fixed in the purpose which God has for you. That purpose is seen only in the cross. God created you for fellowship with himself, and he delivered Jesus up to the cross that your life might be prepared for that fellowship.

Purpose in the Resurrection

By Raymond C. Kelcy

Jesus attached a great importance to his resurrection and spoke of it quite often while he was on earth. He spoke of it as a “must” even as he spoke of his death (Mat-

thew 16:21). That the Son of Man shall rise again is often affirmed by him (Mark 10:34). He declared that it had been written that he should be raised from the dead (Luke 24:46). He looked forward to the event as the fulfilment of prophecy and the apostles would later remember it as a fulfilment of his own prophecies.

In apostolic preaching the resurrection of Christ is given a prominent position; the fact is mentioned in every major recorded sermon in Acts. In the first gospel sermon Peter affirmed that Christ's resurrection was in fulfilment of prophecy (Acts 2:31). He was most desirous of convincing his audience of this event and said concerning it that "we all are witnesses" (Acts 2:32). The proof of Christ's resurrection caused many unbelieving Jews to become believers. In one of Paul's sermons he confidently asserts that God fulfilled the promise he had made to the fathers by raising up Jesus and then declared that a statement of the second Psalm was thereby fulfilled (Acts 13:33-34). Paul later said that Jesus was "declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4).

It becomes quite clear from a study of the foregoing passages that one of the major purposes of the resurrection was to establish the deity of Jesus. Christianity stands or falls with this important event. In the great resurrection chapter—1 Corinthians 15—Paul shows the futility of preaching, of our faith, and of the assurance of salvation if the resurrection of Christ, be not a fact (verses 12-20). In the Book of Acts, when men could be led to believe this event, they were won to Christianity. If this mighty miracle is accepted, all others are easy to accept; if it cannot be accepted, no others matter.

The resurrection was for the purpose of showing God's power and of winning a telling victory over Satan. By his death and resurrection Jesus brought "to nought him that had the power of death" and brought deliverance to them who were in bondage through fear of death (Hebrews 2:14-

15). By defeating Satan in his resurrection Christ showed his mastery over the domain of death ; he now holds the keys of death and tells us not to be afraid (Revelation 1:17-18). Death is a defeated, conquered enemy, but not a destroyed enemy.

God raised Christ from the dead as a prerequisite to our justification. Christ was, affirms Paul, "Delivered up for our trespasses, and raised for our justification" (Romans 4:25). It was not enough that he die. After we have been saved from past sins we need a living priest to intercede for us at the throne of God. The living Christ is a constant Savior. Having been reconciled to God through the death of his Son, "Much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life" (Romans 5:10).

Certainty of the Resurrection

God raised Christ from the dead to beget a hope in the hearts of his people and to give them the blessed assurance of their own resurrection. Peter exclaims that the Father "begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3). We can believe in the certainty that those who "are fallen asleep in Jesus" will be raised "if we believe that Jesus died and rose again" (1 Thessalonians 4:14). Paul expresses the certainty which he personally felt when he says, "Knowing that he that raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise us up also with Jesus" (2 Corinthians 4:14). When Christ was raised he became "the firstfruits of them that are asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:20). The event was an assurance that there will be a later harvest—our own resurrection.

If Christ has not been raised ! This gloomy thought is contemplated by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15. But he soon turns from this gloomy thought and proclaims with assurance, "But now hath Christ been raised" (verse 20). And since this is true, our preaching is not in vain ; since this

is true, our faith is not in vain ; since this is true, we are not yet in our sins ; since this is true, we can believe with confidence that the dead are raised.

DEAD UNTO SIN, ALIVE UNTO GOD

by

V. E. Howard

Ladies and gentlemen, the Christian's relationship to sin is a most important matter. From the days of the apostles and early Christians until now this subject has been vigorously discussed. Today it continues to be a living issue on every hand. Some would argue that the grace of God gives man an excuse to sin. Others believe that once a man is saved he literally *cannot* sin. These and other views are debated concerning the matters of sin and sanctification.

Paul's Great Declaration

Our text is found in Romans, chapter six, where the apostle Paul was inspired by God's Spirit to write on this vital subject. In the closing words of chapter five of Romans, the apostle had just stated : "But where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly." Now, if God bestows grace in proportion to sin, should the child of God continue in sin so that grace might abound more and more ?

Hear the inspired answer from Paul : "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein? Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death : that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection ; knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body

of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin ; for he that hath died is justified from sin. But if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him ; knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more ; death no more hath dominion over him. For the death that he died, he died unto sin once : but the life that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus" (Romans 6 : 1-11).

My friends, one is not saved by the works of the law, or by any works of human righteousness. The apostle Paul, in his great Roman letter, reveals Christ, the Son of God, as man's sin-bearer. Paul explains how God saves man upon the principle of loving, obedient faith—complete trust in the Savior—and not upon the principle of works. Because man is saved by grace, through faith, some have concluded that sinful practices of Christians are excusable. Some have perverted Paul's statement, trying to make it mean that the more one sins, the more grace abounds. This matter is quickly answered by the Holy Spirit, through Paul, and in a way that reveals the absurdity of such a thought !

The apostle declares : "God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein ?" With these clear words, Paul definitely settles the matter of the relationship of grace and sin. No, beloved, grace does not encourage sin. Actually, grace is the only method of salvation that overcomes sin ! The prohibitions of the law only served to intensify lust in a man, and left him a victim of sin, crying for deliverance. The way of God's grace is altogether different. As grace saves, it provides the means for a life of holiness. This is one of the great advantages of grace over the law. What permanent good would justification do if it left every man a helpless victim under the bondage of sin ? Justification by faith is much more than the mere forgiveness of sin. Justification introduces one into a new life, a new state or relationship. In addition to forgiveness of sin, there

is the crucifixion of the "old man," or the "law of sin." On the positive side, justification is the giving of a new principle of life, the "law of the Spirit," the fruit of which is "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control" (Galatians 5 : 22,23).

Dead Unto Sin

Paul does not simply say that the Christian should not live in sin, but he gives the reason *why* this cannot be. The reason for not continuing in sin is to be found within the Christian himself. He must not continue in sin because he is dead to sin ! Hear Paul's conclusion : Are you listening ? "We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein ?" (Romans 6 : 1).

Beloved, there is only one way to be sure of holiness in a man's heart and life, that is, the "old man," the source of sin, must be crucified. Under the law of Moses, human will power and all the divine prohibitions proved to be futile. The law was "weak through the flesh"—that is, the law did not provide for the destruction of the "law of sin" within man that kept him in sin. But God's grace abolishes this "law of sin and of death" and provides the Christian with the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." This principle of life found in Christ releases man from the bondage of sin.

My friends, this is one of the most marvelous features of New Testament Christianity. God's grace does not simply bind upon man a new set of obligations and then expect him, of his own strength, to meet them perfectly. This would serve to seal his condemnation again ! Justification by grace through faith provides a man with a solid foundation for righteousness. First, the old man of lust is crucified, or put to death, and then the Holy Spirit, with His two-edged sword of truth is given to help in the fight against sin.

A Continual Conflict

The New Testament reveals that there is a continual conflict between the Spirit and the lust of the flesh. Listen to

the words of Paul in Galatians 5 : 16, 17 : "But I say, Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh ; for these are contrary the one to the other."

Here in this passage the Holy Spirit is said to be "contrary" to the lust of the flesh, hence, it is by the Spirit that the Christian is able to live a life of victory over sin. This is in harmony with what the apostle also wrote to the Romans. He declared : "So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh to live after the flesh ; for if ye live after the flesh, ye must die; but if by the Spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8 : 12, 13). Here is seen the basis of a life of righteousness in the Christian. The lust of the flesh is destroyed to the extent that man can live a holy, obedient life with the assistance of the Holy Spirit and His sword, the word of truth.

Under a system of law-keeping, man did not have the help of the Holy Spirit; therefore, he was an easy victim of the lust of the flesh. It was impossible for man to die to sin under a law that revived lust. In many passages the apostle Paul associates law and sin. For example, in Galatians 5 : 16, Paul admonishes : Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." Then in verse 18 : "But if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law."

These passages, and many others, clearly establish that to be under law is to be dominated by the flesh and sin. Paul is not saying that the law itself was sin, but rather that "when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were through the law, wrought in our members to bring forth fruit unto death" (Romans 7 : 5).

In the same chapter Paul continues : "What shall we say then ? Is the law sin ? God forbid, Howbeit, I had not known sin, except through the law : for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet : but sin, finding occasion, wrought in me through the commandment all

manner of coveting : for apart from the law sin is dead. And I was alive apart from the law once : but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died" (Romans 7 : 7-9).

There is a great difference between the operation of the law and the operation of grace. Under law the more one sins the greater the punishment. In Romans 6 : 14, Paul declares : "For sin shall not have dominion over you : for ye are not under law, but under grace." Remember that Paul is not saying that a child of God literally *cannot* sin. The possibility of the Christian sinning is assumed by the apostle. What is under consideration is *living* in sin—being *dead* to sin they could not *live* in it !

The point of Paul's teaching is this : the Roman Christians were now related to Christ through His death, burial and resurrection ; they were united to Christ, having been buried with Him in baptism and raised to walk in newness of life, after their death to sin. Their faith and repentance had led them to confess Christ as the Son of God and submit to baptism into Christ, into His death, where the blood of Christ remits all sins.

A New Creature

As a result of such gospel obedience, one becomes a Christian, a new creature. The one who is a Christian has a new principle of life. The apostle explains how that "our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin," (Romans 6 : 6). To the church at Corinth, Paul further revealed : "Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature : the old things are passed away ; behold, they are become new" (2 Corinthians 5 : 17).

The child of God is not forced and driven like a slave, but led like the son of a loving Father. He serves God through love, not through fear alone. The Christian is a new creature—a new person—and he lives righteously because he hates sin and loves righteousness. In other words he does right because he wants to do right ! Is this the working principle of your life ? Beloved, righteousness is as natural to the Christian as sin is to the unsaved.

The Way of Holiness

The prophet Isaiah spoke of Christianity as the "way of holiness," and said that "the unclean shall not pass over it." When God justifies a sinner, He provides for a death to sin. And this death to sin is the basis of righteousness.

The grace of God, then, furnishes no encouragement to

sin, unless one completely misunderstands the subject. Grace provides for a life of righteousness before God. Through the grace of God we are taught how to "live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world" (Titus 2 : 11, 12):

Newness of Life

The obedience of faith, manifested in baptism, results in a "newness of life"—a life of holiness. There is perhaps no stronger argument against sin in the Christian's life than Paul makes in the language of our text. First he declares : "We... died to sin." Then he calls our attention to the true meaning of baptism into Christ. Just as Christ died and, being raised from the dead, ever lives unto God, so we, having died unto sin are raised from the watery grave to live unto God. We, too, are "dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Christ Jesus." The apostle is saying that our emergence from the water of baptism—our "resurrection"—signifies a renunciation of sin and the entrance into a new life of righteousness, peace and joy.

Beloved, Christ's death was for the purpose of destroying sin, and our baptism into His death unites us with this great purpose. If it should be one's purpose to continue to live in sin, he would be ignoring the significance of his baptism into Christ and His death !

There are two parts to baptism, hence, there are two things signified by it. The immersion, or burial, in baptism signifies our death to sin. Then the emersion, or resurrection, in baptism signifies our being made alive unto righteousness. Both meanings are vital and significant. Baptism is unto the remission of sins, to the alien sinner (Acts 2 : 38) And, it is a declaration of faith for the future in the life of a Christian.

My friends, are you dead to the practice of sin ? Are you alive unto God and His righteousness ? Have you really been united with Christ in baptism ? Have you really been *buried and raised* with Christ ?

Obedience from the heart in baptism is an urgent and vital matter. The burial of baptism concerns our repentance and death to sin ; the resurrection of baptism concerns our becoming alive unto righteousness. This is why the apostle was inspired to write the beautiful words : "We who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death..... We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death : that like as Christ was raised from the dead.....so we also might walk in newness of life.....Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Christ Jesus."

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