

16th of September 2018

## Conscience – Pt 4 The conscience of a believer – weak, strong or seared with a hot iron.

This is our fourth teaching on the topic of our conscience. In our previous study we established (1) Christ's blood purged our conscience from dead works to serve the Living God, and (2) we are encouraged to have a pure conscience, a conscience that is void of offence and is good. In this study we establish (1) some believers have a weak conscience, and (2) some have a strong conscience, and (3) in the latter days some will have their consciences seared with a hot iron.

Scriptures upon which this teaching is founded.

### 1. Some believers have a weak conscience.

"Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled" (1 Cor.8: 7). See also 1 Cor.8: 10.

### 2. Some believers have a strong conscience.

"Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend" (1 Cor 8:13).

Without saying so Paul shows he has a strong conscience in this verse because he is prepared not to eat flesh lest he makes his brother with a weak conscience (verse 10, 11, & 12) to offend.

### 3. In the latter times some believers will have a seared conscience.

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (1Tim.4: 1 & 2).

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away [their] ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Tim,4: 3 & 4). That time is now, we are in the latter days as many in the body of Christ turn from truth and give heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.

Their conscience has been seared by a hot iron, sealed shut to the conviction of the Spirit and so desensitised to evil, wickedness and error. You will know them, because when they are presented with truth their conscience will not respond to the conviction of the holy Spirit.

### An illustration to help apply the teaching to our life today.

When we sit at meat and a brother with a weak conscience is offended because the meat has been offered to idols, and we eat that meat and our weaker brother be emboldened to eat also then we cause both of us to sin.

Question to think about.

"But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse" (1 Cor.8: 8), therefore how is it a sin to eat the meat offered unto idols?

My answer to our question from the scriptures.

A member of the body of Christ with a strong conscience has knowledge, which affords them liberties, "But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak" (1 Cor.8: 9). When, through their knowledge "the weak brother perish" (1 Cor.8: 11), ye sin"against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ" (1Cor.8: 12). Therefore Paul says, "if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend" (1Cor.8: 13).

Given that there are those brethren with a weak, strong and a seared conscience, have you ever given up something because it would wound a weak brother? Let us be mindful of those in the body of Christ with a weak conscience – more on this in our final study on this topic.