A SEARED CONSCIENCE

Sometimes in Christian circles, you hear the phrase ***"a seared conscience"*** and it is used as the result of disobeying, or ignoring God's word. The concept is that if you ignore God enough, you lose the ability to hear him; you become insensitive... Well that certainly is true; But the actual scripture that this phrase comes from has an entirely different lesson.

Paul identifies those who have a seared conscience in 1 Timothy 4:1–2. The Spirit clearly says that in ***"later times"*** some will abandon the faith and follow after deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through duplicitous liars, persuasive minister 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;

In this passage, we learn three things about false teachers who lead others into apostasy...

I. They are mouthpieces for evil spirits, since they promulgate *"things taught by demons"*;

II. They are hypocritical liars, since they wear a mask of holiness but are full of falsehood; and

III. They are unprincipled, since their perception has been cauterized.

This explains much. How can false teachers lie with no shame and spread deception with no compunction? Because they have seared consciousness... They are past feeling they are wrong.

Earlier in the epistle, Paul speaks of the ***"good conscience"*** as opposed to the seared conscience. ***"Advancing God's work,"*** he says, comes by faith, and love ***"comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith"*** (1 Timothy 1:4–5). A good conscience has the capability to tell right from wrong and is free from guilt.

A person with a good conscience maintains his integrity. He enjoys fellowship with those who ***"walk in the light, as [Jesus] is in the light"*** (1 John 1:7). The lies of the devil are abomination to the one with a good conscience. Rather than follow the lies of apostates, he will ***"fight the battle well, holding on to faith and a good conscience"*** (1 Timothy 1:18–19).

The false teachers in Paul's day were sometimes called Judaizers because they were teaching gentiles that they first had to come under the Law by converting to Judaism before they could become Christians. The practice of ***Jewish legalism seared the conscience*** by rendering people inflexible and unmerciful. It caused then to believe that people deserved the bad things that happened to them and shouldn't be comforted. Jesus was referring to this when he told the Pharisees to study Hosea 6:6, where God said, ***"I desire mercy not sacrifice"*** (Matt. 9:12-13).

But Paul was referring to the ***"later times"*** a phrase which usually points to the times in which we live. And sure enough, the modern day Judaizers are here... Just like those of Paul's day, they try to convince us that we have to obey the Levitical laws, observe the Feasts of Israel, and abide by Old Testament dietary restrictions as part of our salvation. Some even teach that the Church began during the wilderness wanderings and can only achieve its destiny through Israel.

That is spiritual Blindness... Those who reject Christ are the lost (John 6:68-69). Being spiritually blind, they are perishing (2 Corinthians 4:3-4; Revelation 3:17). They choose not to accept the teachings of Christ and His authority in their lives. (Matthew 28:18).

They are blind to the manifestations of God as revealed throughout His Word and Jesus Christ. (John 1:1; Acts 28:26-27). They are described as those who ***"do not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned."*** (1 Corinthians 2:14).

Those rejecting Christ and His Word are spiritually blind and cannot understand the truth of the Scriptures. The truth sounds foolish to them. (Isaiah 37:23; 1 Corinthians 1:18). The Bible describes those denying God as fools (Psalm 14:1; Matthew 7:26). Because of their blindness and rejection of God and His Word, they are in a perilous, unsaved condition. (John 12:48; Hebrews 2:2-4).

The spiritually blind are simply unable to understand God's Word. (Matthew 13:13; Deuteronomy 29:4). Jesus said, ***"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. You know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you."*** (John 14:15-17).

Paul echoes this when he tells the believers in Rome, ***"Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him."*** (Romans 8:8-9).

Like the Pharisee, members who are enthralled in legalism, desiring their religious beliefs be enforced through Government legislation cannot please God because their lives are steeped in the things of the world with all its passions, their eyes blind to the Spirit of God. The Apostle John said, ***"If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him"*** but that person's love ***"is from the world."*** (1 John 2:15-16).

The cause of spiritual blindness is made quite clear throughout the Scriptures... "***In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbeliever, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."*** (2 Corinthians 4:4). Paul refers to Satan as the ***"god of this world."*** Satan masquerades as an angel of light *(2 Corinthians 11:14)*, and is the cause of all temptations. (Luke 4:2; Hebrews 4:15; 1 Corinthians 7:5)

Satan revelries in scheming against and trapping the derelict, (2 Corinthians 2:11; Ephesians 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:26). Satan's goal is to devour the weak who fall prey to temptation, fear, loneliness, worry, depression, and persecution. (1 Peter 5:8-9).

Without God, and left to ourselves, one can easily succumb to the devil's schemes. He can become so mired in the affairs of this world and in its moral darkness that in the end God turns him over to spiritual blindness and to eternal condemnation. (John 12:40; Romans 1:24-32).

Ministers who depart the faith, heeding seducing spirits, doctrines of devils and speaking lies have their conscience seared with a hot iron, a condition known as ***the blind leading the blind***.

As believers, we have the Spirit of God reigning in our lives to ward off the debilitating effects of Satan's power and the world's influence. (1 John 4:13) John tells us, ***"Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in Him, and he in God."*** (1 John 4:15).

Satan wars within and without us... His weapons are deceitful and crafty schemes to make us doubt and stumble. (2 Corinthians 2:11; Ephesians 4:14). Yet God has provided us with powerful weapons to ward off his flaming arrows. (Ephesians 6:10-18).

As believers, we can overcome the evil one and remain in the Light and never become spiritually blind. For, in truth, Jesus has given us His wonderful promise... ***"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*** (John 8:12)

Proverbs 6:27 asks a rhetorical question to illustrate the consequences of fallaciousness... ***"Can a man scoop fire into his lap / without his clothes being burned?"*** To paraphrase the question in relation to false teaching... ***"Can an apostate dispense the fiery lies of hell without his conscience being seared?"***

Jesus knew that satan would enter the confines of the church... You know we have over 2000 denominations, with different and conflicting doctrines, and that's just the protestant... There shouldn't be any wonder why Satan has such a bountiful workplace.

Jesus certainly expressed His concerns over the devil coming to church. In His great high priestly prayer, Jesus prayed... ***"My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one."*** (John 17:15) Jesus had experienced the opposition of the enemy and knew that His followers would as well. Surely His prayer for protection ought cause us to join Him in that prayer.

There is a very real reason the devil goes to church. The biblical worldview is as of a cosmic battle between the forces of God and the forces of Satan. Christians are those who have changed sides in the battle... Paul writes about this changing of sides in Ephesians 2:2-5.

The Characteristics of this invisible Beast is that he is... A Deceiver... A Liar... With Cunningness. Whose coming is according to the working of Satan in all *[Satan's]* power, signs, and wonders of falsehood and in all deceit of unrighteousness. (2 Thessalonians 2:9, 10; Rev 13:2; Dan 8:24a)

The Characteristics of this Beast... ***[The Devil]*** was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of all lies. (John 8:44)

And in the end of their kingdom, when the rebellion is come to the full, a king of strong presence, and skilled in double-dealing shall stand up... And through his cunningness also he shall cause deceit to prosper in his hand. (Daniel 8:23, 25)

And it cast the truth to the ground; and it practiced, and prospered. (Dan 8:12) And after the league made with him he shall work deceitfully. (Dan 11:23) He shall corrupt by flatteries (Dan 11:32) But he shall come in peaceably and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. (Dan 11:21)

And the Beast... he deceives them. (Rev 19:20) Who deceives them. (Rev 20;10; 12:9) And there was given to it a mouth, speaking great things and blasphemies. *[lies about God]* (Rev 13:5) It deceives them that dwell on the earth. (Rev 13:14)

His lying wonders appeal to those destroying themselves, because they have not received the love of the truth that they may be saved, and for this reason God sends to them a working of error, that they should believe what is false, that all might be judged who have not believed the truth, but have found pleasure in unrighteousness. (2 Thes 2:10-12)

For he shall come up, and shall become strong with a diminished people. ***[the 7-nation Beast that came from the 10-nation Beast; diminished from 10 to 7 nations]*** (Dan 11:23) **(*This was the Horn Beast Who became Papal Rome and rained for 3 ½ prophetic years for which time is equal to 1260 yrs.)***

What is the Mark of the Beast...? What is the Mark of Jesus? The ***"marks of Jesus"*** in Paul's body were the basis for the Galatians to stop heeding the false teachers and thereby cause him trouble... ***"From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen"*** Galatians 6:17–18.

There is no redemption without being identified with Christ and His death and His sufferings, and that is not just an identification by confession or profession. With ***"The marks of Jesus"*** we are identifying ourselves with, the man of sorrows, despised and rejected of men. You see, to us He is the glory of God; but to the Judaizer's He was an offense, a stumbling stone... He was foolishness.

The significances of this is being ***"Marked"***. In ancient days, certain societies would place the stigma of committing a crime upon the criminals. Many times, criminals would have a brand placed upon their faces. Slaves also would be branded in certain parts of their bodies to identify ownership and the fact that they were merely chattel. ***"Ye are not your own…ye are bought with a price"*** (1 Corinthians 6:19 20)!

Where was the stigma that Paul knew...? Paul very clearly said listen... ***"From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus"*** (Galatians 6:17).

The stigma of the Beast... They are the deceived, they received his ***(stigma)*** mark through his cunningness and he shall cause deceit to prosper at his hand, and are those that worship his image. (Rev 19:20)

We learned from Study that a terrible conflict is in progress between God and the devil. It has raged through the centuries since Lucifer, heaven's most powerful angel, rebelled against God.

With the angels who joined him, he attempted to overcome God and seize control of the universe.

God and the loyal angels had no choice but to eject Lucifer and his angels from heaven. Lucifer, who became known as the devil and Satan, was infuriated. His determination to destroy God and control the universe has grown with every passing year. Amazingly, he has won support of the vast majority of earth's people in his rebellion.

The Lord also asks for people's loyalty and support, but He leaves all free to choose. Soon every person on earth will have aligned with either Satan or God. The final battle between Satan and God is just ahead, and it is described in the book of Revelation. This book points out that God has an emblem, or mark, which identifies His people.

Satan also has an emblem, or mark, that will identify those who support him. As usual, Satan will work through an earthly power symbolized in Revelation by a beast to impose his mark. This will be the beast's mark, which every lost person of the end time will receive. Unless you know what his ***"mark"*** is, how will you be able to avoid receiving it?

He Will Place Himself as God ***[As Christ fulfilled scriptures on his last day, so too will the Beast-man fulfill many of the following verses on his last day]*** Who opposes and exalts himself on high against all called God or worshiped, so that he himself sits down in the ***(place)*** of the God, showing himself that he is God (2 Thes 2:4) ***"I am God."*** *(Ezek. 28:2****, see Hebrew text; the prince of Tyrus was a type of the Beast-man)***

A mouth speaking great things (Dan 7:8) whose look is greater than his fellows. (Dan 7:20) He shall speak great words against the most High. (Dan 7:25) He magnified himself even to the prince of the host. (Dan 8:11; 11:36, 37) And he shall magnify himself in his heart. (Dan 8:25)

He shall stand up against the Prince of princes. (Dan 8:25) And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against God of gods. (Dan 11:36)

Neither shall he regard God of his fathers. (Dan 11:37) And there was given to him a mouth, speaking great things and blasphemies... And it opened its mouth for blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name and his tabernacle. (Rev 13:5, 6)

And it had two horns like a lamb *[Christ],* and spoke as a dragon *[Satan].* (Rev 13:11) False prophet. (Rev 19:20; 20 10; 13:11)

It is the Satan inside of him that most perfectly deceives the whole world and that the world worships; he is but a reflection of what is inside of him. And all that dwell on the earth shall do it homage... And it deceives those that dwell upon the earth. (Rev 13:8, 14) Deceives the whole world. (Rev 19:20; 20:3; 12:9)

And the Dragon *[Satan]* gave it *[The Beast]* his power. (Rev 13:2) And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power *[but the power of Satan],* and he shall prosper, and practice. (Dan 8:24)

Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god *[Satan].* (Dan 11:39)

And the World's Reaction... And the whole earth wondered after the Beast. And they did homage to the Dragon, because he gave authority to the Beast (Rev 13:3-4)

Other Characteristics and Actions... He has the number of the Beast which is 666 (Rev 13:18), which is the number of a person, not a title, state, language, or nation.

A Man of lawlessness, Son of Destruction (2 Thes 2:3, 8)

Because he is lawless he hopes to change the holy set times and laws. (Dan 7:25)

To a lawless person, morals mean nothing... The lawless have no shame. In his estate shall he honor the god of forces. (Dan 11:38)

And his power shall be mighty (Dan 8:24), and it practiced, and prospered (Dan 8:12)

In prosperity ***(or in careless security or peace),*** he shall destroy many (Dan 8:25; 11:24)

Grows great toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land (Dan 8:9) except the land of Edom, Moab, the chief of the children of Ammon. (Dan 11:41)

Remember Jerusalem, especially in the Old Testament, is the geographical center of the Bible. He will stretch forth his hand also upon the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. (Dan 11:42)

He shall enter peaceably or with ease upon the fat places of the province and he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches (Dan 11:24) shall return into his land with great riches (Dan 11:28)

Shall divide the land for gain (Dan 11:39)

He shall enter into the glorious land [Jerusalem and surrounding area], and many [countries] shall be overthrown (Dan 11:41)

And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain. (Dan 11:45)

He shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver (Dan 11:43) and no one should be able to buy or sell except he that had the mark, the name of the beast, or the number of its name. (Rev 13:17)

By reason of the Last War he will take away the daily sacrifices of the whole world, for it is with this war that the old age will end and the new age without suffering will begin, and it is by him that the living sacrifices of the saints will end. (Dan 8:11, 12; 11:31)

And causes that those who don't worship the image [7 nations or Satan] to be killed (Rev 13:15)

Time of the Beast's Power with Satan -- 3 1/2 Years

There was given to him authority to pursue his career forty-two months. (Rev 13:5)

And he shall speak great things against the Most High... and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and dividing of time [3 ½ years... "*time*" = one year] (Dan 7:25, 8, 20, 24)

The abomination that makes desolate (the Abomination of Desolation) is set up 1290 days before the daily sacrifice is taken away (Dan 12:11); the abomination is the Beast system and individual who leads the system which is set up at first with ten nations [horns] (Dan 7:8, 20, 24; Rev 13:1), but three nations *[horns]* are subdued or destroyed leaving seven nations *[horns].*

(Dan 7:8, 20, 24; Rev 13:5 ***"deadly wound"*** leaving the second beast w/ seven nations); and it was this second beast who had the deadly wound yet lived (Rev 13:3, 17:8) that had the ***"mouth speaking great things and blasphemies"*** (Rev 13:5; Dan 7:8, 20, 25) for forty-two months or a time and times and dividing of time *[3 ½ years].* (Rev 13:5; Dan 7:25)

So, 30 days after the system of the Beast is set up, three nations are destroyed, and then the seven-nation beast with the individual Beast who blasphemies God will rule for 3 ½ years or 1260 days.

This 1260 days or 42 months rulership of the Beast System and Individual is just before Christ and his Saints take control of the whole world. (Dan 7:25-27, 9-11)

The Church During the 3 ½ Years... The Holy city shall they tread under foot forty-two months (Rev 11:2)

The Holy people's power scattered for a time, times, and a half [3 ½ years] (Dan 12:7); woman or Church nourished for a time, and times, and half a time [3 ½ years] from the face of the serpent (Rev 12:14)

The woman or Church is fed ***[Spiritual food]*** for 1260 days (Rev 12:7); the two witnesses teach in their 1260 days (Rev 11:3)

At the very end, Beast fights against Christ and his Saints

Make war against the saints (Dan 7:21; 8:24; Rev 13:7)

Stand up and try to make war against the returning Christ (Dan 8:25; Rev 17:14; 19:19)

Sits in the temple ***(People's Hearts)*** and calls himself God. (2 Thes 2:4; Ezek. 28:2) "***Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you"*** 1 Corinthians 3:16

But... The saints will prevail (Dan 7:22, 27; Rev 11:18) The Lamb or Christ will overcome. (Dan 7:14; Rev 11:17; 17:14; 2 Thes. 2:8)