

66.5 Souls for Sale

We use the phrase "*make a deal with the Devil*" to describe a person or persons perceived as having collaborated with evil for their own benefit. We use a similar expression: "*sold his soul to the devil.*" We mean that a person has resorted to something wrong or underhanded to get ahead rather than living a godly life. In both cases, the idea is that people get ahead by compromising with evil.

Numerous famous works refer to pacts with the devil, from Catholic priests and a pope to the violin brilliance of Giuseppe Tartini and Niccolò Paganini to the Mississippi "crossroad" myth associated with Robert Johnson to artists and many more. Each of these had their "claim to fame" and enjoyed the spotlight, power, wealth, and ability for an ever so brief moment. Legends indicate that these individuals made a literal pact with Satan for their success.

Satan offered success to Jesus in **Matthew 4** and **Luke 4** while Jesus was in the wilderness undergoing His temptations. Notice Satan's third temptation to Jesus in **Matthew 4:8-9** (NKJV):

⁸ Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."

Jesus withstood the temptation, but could you imagine how tempting it would have been for Jesus to have bypassed the cross? Jesus was so full of integrity that He would not give in. He came to save the world and become our King, and He could only do that by following the will of God and laying down His life.

Someone has said, "*You can sell your soul to the devil but you may not enjoy the price.*" This statement reminds me of what Jesus said in **Matthew 16:24-27** (NKJV):

²⁴ Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. ²⁵ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. ²⁶ For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? ²⁷ For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

Many of the current elites who have willingly or unwittingly sold their souls to the devil had better enjoy their lives on earth, for this is as good as it will get for them. Remember the story of the rich man and Lazarus in **Luke 16**? The rich man had everything in life except God, and Lazarus had nothing but God. Both men died, and Lazarus went to be with the Lord in "Abraham's bosom," while the rich man went to torment.

Following Christ is not the way of ease. Instead, it is a way filled with sacrifice and courage. The disciple of Jesus gains supernatural joy by walking like his Master. There are blessings in following Jesus in the here and now. The most significant benefits, however, come in the "*hereafter.*" Many have difficulty with these words of Jesus and cannot pay the price for the anticipated joy that one day comes to believers in the world to come. These people want what they want, and they want it now. While patience is a virtue, it is not their virtue.

Whether we make a literal pact with the Devil or embrace his path, we can prosper financially, gain fame, increase our ability, or temporarily escape justice. Even to the casual observer, it would appear there are

myriads of people who have made deals with the Devil and sold their souls to him, sacrificing themselves on the “altar of success.”

Our Founders knew there was no shortcut to success in our dealings with Great Britain. They knew they had to be “all in” and pay the price before they could have Liberty. There were temptations along the way to quit and give in to the King, but they would not. Even Jacob Duche, the man who opened the first Continental Congress in a moving prayer, encouraged the Patriots to renounce their venture.

Then there were genuine Patriots like **Nathan Hale** who was hanged by the British for spying. You remember his stirring words, “*I regret that I have but one life to lose for my country.*” He was “all in” and paid the ultimate price. His death rallied our troops with the courage to fight on.

We are in a fight for the soul of America and the souls of Americans. Like the King of Sodom, a figure of Satan, the literal Adversary wants our souls. He tempts us in our areas of greatest vulnerability to lead us away from God and genuine success, offering a counterfeit. Notice the conversation between Abram and the King of Sodom after Lot’s rescue in **Genesis 14:21-23** (NKJV):

²¹ Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give me the persons [*literally souls*], and take the goods for yourself.” ²² But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, ²³ that I *will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, ‘I have made Abram rich’—* “

There is a story of a university student who went to take an exam under a demanding teacher. The student attached a \$100 Bill with a note that read, “*\$1/point.*” A few days later, the teacher returned the graded test to the student with \$64 in change. Money cannot buy people with integrity and principle.

Would you sell your soul to the devil? If so, what is your price? He would be glad to offer you a temporary benefit but you won’t like the ultimate price you will pay. There is One, however, who is willing to pay for your soul with His life. Paul reminds us in **1 Corinthians 6:20** that we were “**bought with a price.**” We were redeemed “**with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot**” (**1 Peter 1:19**, ESV).

Our Patriot Forefathers understood the redemptive nature of Jesus. They were “all in” for Liberty, and most of them were “all in” for Jesus. Listen to a quote by Dr. Benjamin Rush:

"If moral precepts alone could have reformed mankind, the mission of the Son of God into all the world would have been unnecessary. The perfect morality of the gospel rests upon the doctrine which, though often controverted has never been refuted: I mean the vicarious life and death of the Son of God."

I pray that no matter the cost, we can choose to stand in integrity for the country that once chose God. We can be “all in” for America once we are “all in” for Christ, as Paul stated, “**having done all, to stand**” (**Ephesians 6:13**).

Let’s Keep The Light of *Standing Strong in Integrity* Burning!