

The Devil's Trophy Room



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The Devil's Trophy Room

1 Chronicles 10:1-14 Now the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa. (2) And the Philistines followed hard after Saul, and after his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchishua, the sons of Saul. (3) And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him, and he was wounded of the archers. (4) Then said Saul to his armourbearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and abuse me. But his armourbearer would not; for he was sore afraid. So Saul took a sword, and fell upon it. (5) And when his armourbearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise on the sword, and died. (6) So Saul died, and his three sons, and all his house died together. (7) And when all the men of Israel that were in the valley saw that they fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, then they forsook their cities, and fled: and the Philistines came and dwelt in them. (8) And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his sons fallen in mount Gilboa. (9) And when they had stripped him, they took his head, and his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to carry tidings unto their idols, and to the people. (10) And

they put his armour in the house of their gods, and fastened his head in the temple of Dagon. (11) And when all Jabeshgilead heard all that the Philistines had done to Saul, (12) They arose, all the valiant men, and took away the body of Saul, and the bodies of his sons, and brought them to Jabesh, and buried their bones under the oak in Jabesh, and fasted seven days. (13) So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it; (14) And enquired not of the LORD: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse.

When I started going to school as a boy, my mother took a part-time job at a McDonalds close by. My father was a sailor in the Navy and we had one car, so she would walk to work. She started out as a fry cook, then went to a swing manager, then an assistant manager, and then became the store manager. She was so good at what she did that she finally ended up as the supervisor for an entire chain of privately owned McDonald's franchises.

The owner of the chain was a wealthy man who often traveled on hunting and fishing expeditions. He had a yacht and would go deep-sea fishing. Once he gave me a fresh set of shark's teeth – still in the jaws. He also loved

The Devil's Trophy Room

to go out into the wilderness for weeks at a time, hunting big game.

One day the boss threw a party and my family was invited to his country estate. I remember being shown his trophy room. He had an entire room full of mounted animals and fish that he had taken. He was very proud of his trophies. He went through a lot of trouble to get them and a lot of expense to have them mounted and preserved. Yet when he went into his trophy room, he relived the thrill of the hunt, the thrill of taking his prey. He would brag on them to his friends. He could tell the story behind each trophy.

The devil is the ultimate hunter. Satan is never described in the Bible as a passive or peaceful creature. Every description of the devil in the Bible is that of a carnivorous predator: a serpent, a lion, a dragon, a beast. The Bible says that he is like a roaring lion, walking about, seeking whom he may devour.

Jesus told us that he wants to steal, kill and destroy. He is not content just to steal from you your purity, your virtue, your name, your marriage, or your children. He wants to kill you and everything good about you. Then he wants to use your downfall as a means to destroy many others, and to bring destruction and shame to the people of God, the lost, and the cause of Jesus Christ. The destruction is the fallout of foolish decisions, the fallout of sin. Often this

fallout is, like the radiation of a dirty bomb, more harmful and destructive than the initial explosion.

I wonder what Satan's trophy room looks like? I imagine it is pretty full. He has been far too successful in this world, even among God's people. Why? Because we are not wise to his ways.

We do not walk in the whole armor of God. We do not listen, we do not learn. We treat the devil as if he is a kitty cat on the back porch instead of a roaring lion.

Some soldiers have said that they did not understand war until they knew someone that died in combat. Suddenly, the reality set in – this was not a video game. It was life or death. Death could come suddenly, without warning, and with awful finality. A man in my church was serving with the Marines in Iraq when his good friend was suddenly shot in the head by a sniper, less than three feet away. That image will be burned into his brain for the rest of his life.

As Christians, we fool around like we are on a playground, and then some Christian or some preacher is suddenly slaughtered in our very presence, and suddenly we realize that our playground is actually a battle zone. Here we are, goofing off, bickering with each other, puffed up with pride, worldly-minded, doing our own thing, and then suddenly someone we know is shot through the head and

The Devil's Trophy Room

dead on the ground, and we realize that Satan really does want to destroy our lives.

Only recently, a preacher I know was out of state preaching a meeting one day; the next day he was in jail, charged with a horrible crime; the third day, he was dead, having hung himself in his jail cell. As I watched this unfold with dizzying speed, and watched the fallout in his family and church, and to the cause of Christ as the news spread nation-wide, that the devil is not our opponent in a game, but our adversary, seeking our destruction.

What would we find in Satan's trophy room? What pride does he feel as he looks around and sees some Bible person's head on the wall, or some Christian or preacher that he destroyed? Does he brag on it to the other demons? Does he say, "Look at that one. Remember how I got him? Remember how I got her? It took a while, but I got him. I destroyed him. Look at all the others here that became easy prey because I took him out."

Folks, I am determined that my head is not going to adorn the wall of the devil's trophy room. However, it is not enough to say that. We have to take heed to the Word of God. We have to get ready for spiritual combat. We have to learn the wiles of the devil, the master hunter, the lion that seeks us out, the snake that strikes from concealment, the dragon that wants to crush and destroy our lives.

Tonight, consider with me three men who ended up in Satan's trophy room. But for the grace of God and good decisions on our part, their stories could become ours!

I. KING SAUL.

❖ **1 Chronicles 10:8-10** And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his sons fallen in mount Gilboa. (9) And when they had stripped him, they took his head, and his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to carry tidings unto their idols, and to the people. (10) And they put his armour in the house of their gods, and fastened his head in the temple of Dagon.

What a sad end to the man who had been anointed by Samuel to be the first king of Israel! There he is, lying dead in a field, surrounded by his sons. Can you imagine the scene as the Philistines swoop in like a bunch of vultures, picking the clothes, jewelry, and weapons off of the dead? When they realized that it was their hated enemy, Saul, they stripped his corpse, cut off his head, and turned it into a traveling sideshow for the praise of their gods. They would announce it as a big religious attraction: "Come and see the head of king Saul, the great king of Israel! Come and see how our gods gave us the victory over the God of Israel! Come see the head of our great enemy!"

The Devil's Trophy Room

They took his body, taller than all the men of Israel, and hung it up on the wall of Bethshan. Everyone walking by would look up and laugh at the dead, decapitated body of the great king of Israel. They nailed the bodies of his sons to the wall next to him. There hung the body of one of the best men in all of Israel, Jonathan, part of the fallout of Saul's foolishness and sin.

They fastened his head – the head that had been anointed with oil forty years prior by Samuel - on a spike in the temple of Dagon, and put his armor in the house of Ashtoreth. Everyone that came to worship Dagon would see the head of Saul and his armor, and praise the devil for his victory over the anointed of God. Saul's head literally ended up in the devil's trophy case.

What led to this shame? What led Saul to go from a promising start to a suicide finish? What steps led him downward, from a man whose heart God had changed (1 Sam. 10:9) to a man who was oppressed by an evil spirit, sought out witches, committed mass murder, tried to murder David, and finally took his own life? What course did Saul follow that led to the devil's trophy case?

Saul had two great weaknesses in his character. He had two great flaws that brought about his destruction. These two major areas caused him to be rejected by the Lord and destroyed by the devil. We can find both in this passage of scripture:

❖ **1 Samuel 15:22-23** And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. (23) For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

His two great faults were rebellion and stubbornness. He wanted to obey – his way, in his time. In fact, he did not obey. He did not do what he was told. God commanded him to annihilate the Amalekites. Instead, he spared the best of the people, the best of the livestock, and their king. Blatant disobedience! Yet, he claimed to have obeyed the Lord. He said, “Oh yes, I’ve kept the commandment of the Lord! I am an obedient servant of the Lord! I have done all that God said to do!”

Samuel was not fooled:

❖ **1Sa 15:14** And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?

Many people say, “Oh, I have obeyed the Lord! I am living right! I have done the right things.” Yet, in the background of their lives can be heard the bleating of spared sheep and the lowing of unconsecrated oxen. They are committed and obedient! Just don’t look too closely at

their TV entertainment center, their music collection, the books on the shelf, the clothes in the closet, or the history of their internet browsing!

Saul was put on the spot, but he was stubborn as well as rebellious. He did not repent – he made excuses. He blamed the people. They were the ones who spared the best of the people and the flocks. They forced him!

Rebellion gets men into trouble, and stubbornness keeps them from getting right and getting out of trouble. Saul was obstinate. Like a mule, he had to constantly be pulled along, while he pulled against authority every step of the way.

He was like a child who, when told to do something, is going to do it, but very slowly, and without enthusiasm. In fact, he is doing it with a bad attitude, and he will not do it all. He will just do some of it. Why? Because he is stubborn about doing what he wants to do.

A stubborn person will not yield, even if it means getting hurt. Many years ago, two ships collided in the Black Sea off the coast of Russia. Hundreds of passengers died as they were hurled into the icy waters below. News of the disaster was further darkened when an investigation revealed the cause of the accident. It was not a technology problem such as radar malfunction, or even a thick fog. The cause was human stubbornness. Each captain was aware of the other ship's presence nearby. Both could

have steered clear, but according to news reports, neither captain wanted to give way to the other. Each was too proud to yield first. By the time they came to their senses, it was too late.

When I showed stubbornness as a kid, my mother would say, “You’d cut your nose off to spite your own face.” My mother knew all sorts of spiritual truths. The stubborn person will do just that. They will not turn from their stubbornness even if it hurts them.

Saul knew he was wrong. Nevertheless, he was not going to give in. He was not going to admit wrong. That stubbornness cost him God’s blessing and presence. Saul became afflicted by an evil spirit. He became inflamed with pride, jealousy, and hatred. He became a mass murderer. He consulted a witch. He led his people into battle without God – in fact, God was against him because of his rebellion and his stubbornness. He died, his sons died, many others died, and he became a trophy in the devil’s trophy room, to be bragged on and laughed over.

Do not let rebellion and stubbornness put you in a position to be taken out by the devil. Rebellion towards God opens us up to devilish oppression. Be tenderhearted and easily led.

❖ **Psa 26:2 Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.**

David wanted God to have the reins of his life. He asked God to test his sensitivity towards God's leadership. "Try my reins." Pull to the right and see if I respond. Pull back and see if I slow down. Pull to the left and see if I turn left. Slap me with the reins and see if I hurry up. David wanted to be sensitive to the leadership of God. Saul was the opposite of this.

Develop the heart of a student, not a scorner. Be teachable, humble, easily corrected. Stubborn people get huffy when they are corrected. Stubborn people get defensive when they are corrected. A stubborn person's first response is to ***pull back***. Be easily corrected. Be teachable.

Humble yourself before the Lord. That is the safest way to miss the pathway that led Saul to death and destruction – his body nailed to the city wall and his head adorning the temple of a pagan god.

II. SAMSON.

Samson is one the greatest disappointments in the Bible, one of the greatest examples of wasted potential you can find in the history of God's people.

He had a great start in life, a good set of parents and a godly home. I think that perhaps his parents spoiled him; at least his life bore the fruit of a spoiled child. Certainly, as a young adult, he was not following his parents, but doing his own thing, and it was too late to correct him then. If only parents would win the war before the child is four! A stubborn three-year-old is much easier to deal with than a husky seventeen-year-old is!

Oh, Manaoh and his wife might have said, “But our son is special. He was given by God and an angel came and told us, so we’ll just let him do what he wants because he’s special.” Well, every child is special and every child comes from God. However, our little angels need to be dehorned. They inherited a sin nature from us. Spoiled brats grow up to be big spoiled brats. Moreover, spoiled brats make the worst kind of Christians – the worst kind of wife, the worst kind of husband, the worst kind of parent, the worst kind of church member.

Samson had great potential and great talents from God, and God had used him greatly. However, he, like Saul, had some flaws that eventually caused him to end up in Satan’s trophy case.

Samson did not live by Bible principles. He was not separated from the Philistines. He hung around with them and, because of that, met and married a heathen Philistine woman. Parents, you better watch out whom your kids

hang out with! Samson did not control his lusts or passions. He indulged his desires with a harlot and then later by moving in with that wicked Philistine woman, Delilah. He was a man with a carnal appetite and little moral self-discipline.

Like Saul, he had a rebellious streak. Samson demanded of his father, who did not want him marrying a Philistine woman, "Get her for me to wife!" It is a sad day when parents take orders from children!

He was carnal. He was rebellious. He was indulgent. He was lustful. He was not separated from the world. He took his Nazarite vow, a vow of holiness and separation, lightly. He was immoral.

All of these things lead to Satan's trophy case. Worldliness, rebellion, a lack of principles and convictions, and a lack of self-discipline set him up for a fall.

He laid his head in Delilah's lap and had his hair cut off, symbolic of the severing of his Nazarite vow, the will of God for his life, and the Spirit of God left him. We should understand that Samson's power was NEVER in his long hair. His power came from the Spirit of God. When his hair was cut, picturing the final severance of his Nazarite vow of holiness, the HOLY Spirit left him on his own.

❖ **Judges 16:20-21** And she said, **The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and**

said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him. (21) But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house.

Do we dare to serve God in the flesh? Do we think that we can go to church on Sunday and preach, teach, sing, and serve, while indulging the wicked lusts of our flesh through the week, without consequences? Apparently, many do – and they will, eventually, end up mounted on the devil’s wall. You cannot sow to the flesh and not reap a harvest of corruption. Secret sins will come to life. The Christian or preacher who lives a double life will be found out!

God knows where you go when you are away from town on business, or preaching! He knows what we watch on the TV or the computer in a lonely motel room. He knows the secret thoughts and imaginations of our hearts.

- ❖ **Num 32:23 But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.**
- ❖ **1Ti 5:24 Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after.**

Here is the mighty man, Samson, the killer of thousands. He went out as he always did – just as we do when we go

The Devil's Trophy Room



to our pulpits, our classes, and our ministries as we always do – and did not know that the Lord had left him.

The Philistines threw him to the ground, gouged out his eyes, bound him, and carried him away to Satan's trophy room.

They could have just killed him. However, Satan does not just want to kill you. He wants to get some glory out of your life. He wants to use your life to shame the cause of God. He wants to use your life to embolden the enemies of God, to make you a laughingstock to the ungodly. He wants to blind you and let you grind away for a while as everyone laughs and mocks and throws things at you, and blasphemes God.

How pitiful! What a shame!

God did give him one last victory, as he pulled the temple down and destroyed the Philistines. However, when I think of Samson I always think of the last verse dealing with his life:

❖ **Jdg 16:31 Then his brethren and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought him up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the buryingplace of Manoah his father. And he judged Israel twenty years.**

I picture old Manaoh, and perhaps his white-haired mother, coming down to a pile of rubble. There, under

that pile of broken pieces, is the broken body of the little boy God had given them. They had raised him with such promise and hope. His name meant “Sunshine,” and he had been the sunshine of their lives. Now, he lies dead at the bottom of a pile of rubble.

Young people, you are the sunshine of your parents’ lives. God gave you to them. They are no more perfect than Samson’s parents, but they have dedicated you to the Lord. They were right to do so, and you are right to dedicate yourself to the Lord. Honor the vows of God on your life! Do not think that you can sow to the flesh and reap good things. Your life will end up in a pile of rubble.

God wants to use us. He wants to bless us. He wants to give us spiritual victory. Beware of carnal flaws in your character. Beware of a rebellious streak towards authority. Beware of lust and wicked thoughts and desires. Stay away from the wrong crowds. Remember your commitments to God. Remember your upbringing for God.

Can you picture Satan in his trophy room, laughing at the head of Samson, the strongest man ever?

III. JUDAS ISCARIOT.

Oh yes, he is in there. In fact, the devil may have a whole room set aside for lost preachers and unsaved church members.

The Devil's Trophy Room

Judas Iscariot. One of the twelve. A charter member of the First Baptist Church, World. One of the apostles. A preacher. The treasurer. A disciple. One who listened to the Lord. One who walked and talked with Christ. One who must have, like the others, performed miracles. One who served the Lord right alongside Peter, James and John.

But he was lost.

He was baptized by John, but he was lost. I wonder how many I have baptized that were lost? It is not hard to make a profession of faith, but that does not mean that one has been born again. John baptized Judas, and Jesus chose him and added him to the church. However, he was not saved.

As you study the gospels, you will find Judas at the bottom of all their strife and trouble. He was one of those that stays in the shadows and whispers and causes strife. He complained about the woman's offering of spikenard that she used to anoint the Lord's head and feet, causing the other brethren to murmur. He was also a thief and stole regularly from their offerings. Jesus called him "the son of perdition" (Jn 17:12), a name that could never fit any child of God, no matter how backslidden.

I have sometimes wondered if Judas KNEW he was lost? Did he sit at the campfire after a day of ministry and think to himself, "Boy, I sure have these guys fooled! They think that I am a disciple, when I know that I am really not even saved!" No, I have a strong suspicion that Judas THOUGHT

he was saved the entire time. If doubts crept into his mind, he may have dismissed them in the same way that modern unsaved church members do today:

- *“I have been baptized – by John the Baptist, no less!”*
- *“I am a church member.”*
- *“I serve the Lord.”*
- *“I have led other people to the Lord.”*
- *“I am a good person.”*
- *“I am a preacher; I have even been ordained.”*
- *“The Lord Himself chose me as an apostle. I have been called.”*
- *“Would I do all this if I was not saved?”*

Judas was just like many an unsaved church member or Christian - self-justifying, convinced that he was okay. Surely, he was saved. Look at his works! Too many are trusting in their works, and not the grace of God. Judas was not saved. He was not a child of God. He was the son of perdition.

You might ask, “Why did the Lord choose Judas if he was unsaved?” To fulfill prophecy, for one thing. But also to show us that being a church member, being baptized, and serving in the church is not equivalent to being *born again*.

Satan loves to pull the wool over the eyes of unsaved church members, even preachers, and he laughs when they die and go to hell. “But I’m a church member! But I

have good works! But I've been called into the ministry!
But I've been used! **Look at what I've done!**

- ❖ **Matthew 7:21-23** Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. (22) **Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?** (23) And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

I am not trying to scare anyone who has truly been born again. I am not trying to shake or rob the assurance of a saved person. Salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Salvation comes when we acknowledge the truth about ourselves, repenting of our sin, and trusting Jesus Christ as our Saviour. It comes when we by faith claim His promise. It takes place ***instantly*** when we repent of our sin and self-righteousness and receive Christ into our hearts.

I ***know*** I am saved. I ***know*** that I trusted Christ as my personal Saviour. I was born again on April 21, 1991. I know the date because the preacher wrote it down. You may not remember the date, but you should remember the experience! I did not just say a prayer without meaning. I believed from the heart.

If you have been saved, trust God's promise and do not let the devil steal your assurance. Rest on His promise:

❖ **1 John 5:12-13 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. (13) These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.**

However, if you have never been born again, don't let the devil give you false assurance. You are not good enough without Jesus Christ. Your work in church is not enough. Your baptism is not enough. Your faithfulness to church is not enough. Preaching or teaching the Bible is not enough. Someone telling you that you are saved is not enough. You need to be born again.

Almost fifty years ago, my father walked forward during a revival in a Baptist Church in California. He was sixteen years old. He went forward and was taken immediately back and baptized. They never showed him one verse of scripture. He was baptized and told that he was saved.

A year later, my Dad graduated High School, got on a Greyhound bus, and went to boot camp, having enlisted in the Navy. He served for 24 years, and spent time in the jungles of Viet Nam. He was involved in two car accidents that could have been fatal. If he had been killed in Viet Nam, or if he had been killed in either of those car

accidents, he would be in hell today – a trophy of the devil, thinking he was saved because a sloppy pastor did not make sure that he heard the gospel before he was baptized.

After I was saved at age fifteen, my parents got into church. My Dad joined on his previous “profession” and baptism. He was faithful and became a deacon and the church treasurer. By then, I had moved away and was in Bible College. One day, my Dad walked into his pastor’s office and said, “Pastor, I don’t remember getting saved. I was baptized, but I don’t think they ever showed me a thing about being saved.” And there in the pastor’s office, my Dad traded a false and empty profession for a genuine salvation. He was born again. Soon after, he was baptized properly and they are still in church today.

I fear that we do have too many religious professors who are not possessors. Some faked it. Some did not pay attention and then said a prayer. Some, perhaps, were in a large group of people, and someone did their best, but they really did not understand, and were led in a prayer. A prayer saves no one. Heart faith, with understanding of the gospel, is what saves. Satan will laugh one day. They are his trophies. In hell, they will be his trophies.

If you are constantly plagued with doubts, settle it today. Turn to Jesus Christ NOW, confessing that you are a sinner that needs to be saved, and ask Him to forgive you of all

your sins, trusting that His sacrifice on the cross and resurrection from the dead are sufficient for your salvation.

Perhaps you would like to pray something like this from your heart:

✝️ *“Dear God, I know that I am a sinner. I need to get saved. I know that my good works, church membership, baptism, and religion cannot save me. I ask you, on the basis of the blood of Jesus Christ, to forgive me of my sins. Dear Jesus, please come into my heart. As best I know how, by faith I receive you as my personal Saviour. Amen.”*

Judas never repented to the Lord. He repented to himself. He was sorry when he saw how things worked out. However, he did not repent towards God. He signed a “Judas confession” of guilt by taking his own life. He hung himself, died, and went to hell.

THE LORD’S TROPHY ROOM

Satan is not the only one with a trophy room. The Lord has a trophy room, too. Heaven is His trophy room, and it is a trophy room of grace. *Every saved person is a trophy of the*

The Devil's Trophy Room

grace of God. If you are saved, you will stand forever as a testimony to the saving grace of Jesus Christ!

- ❖ **Ephesians 2:6-7** **And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: (7) That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.**

Throughout eternity, which trophy room will you adorn? Will you be the devil's trophy in hell, or the Saviour's trophy in heaven?

As a Christian, are you determined that your life will not end up nailed to the wall of Bethshan? Are you wise to the devil's tactics? Are there areas of weakness – fleshly areas of carnality, inconsistency, and worldliness – that the devil could use to destroy your life? May God help us all to wise up, and realize that the devil is not our opponent in a game, but our adversary in battle, and he wants nothing more than destroy our lives and use us to bring shame to the cause of Jesus Christ.

