

Three Windows: The Great Vendetta

3/29/09- Jim Johnson

An angel named Lucifer coveted the throne of God and the adulation of men (Isa. 14:12-13). He led a rebellion but was stopped and then judged by God. And as if to complicate matters, God also planned some day on giving a throne and the worship of man to another - His own son (Isa 9:6). This enraged the devil and motivated him to wage a vendetta on this child whenever He should appear.

A. Satan used the insecurities of _____ to get to Christ. - Matt 2:13, 16

Satan exploited the insecurities of Herod who wanted no rivals to His throne. He, therefore, determined to murder the infant babe born King of the Jews. He slaughtered the babies of Bethlehem to make sure that the Christ child died.

B. Satan used his deceptive powers to get _____ to kill himself. - Matt 4:5-7

Jesus was in the middle of a desert fast when Satan began to work on Him in his weakened state. He tried to use deception and intrigue in an attempt to confuse Him. He dared Him to jump off the highest point on the temple structure. Satan reminded Him that God would care for His son if He were to jump. Satan believed that Christ could have and would have died had he jumped, but his effort was in vain.

C. Satan used the wounded pride of His _____ to push Jesus off a cliff. (Lk 4:16-30)

Jesus offended the sensitivities of his hometown neighbors when he suggested that he was the Messiah. Satan took their discomfort and fanned it into an inferno. They pulled and pushed Christ to the edge of a cliff near to Nazareth. They intended to push him off but through God's miraculous intervention, their grips were loosened and Christ was able to walk away

D. Satan used the jealousy of the _____ to stone Him – (John 8:59; 10:31)

The Pharisees were very comfortable in the seats of power of the nation. They were not really ready for the Messiah to come and push them to the periphery. They were offended by what he taught and therefore picked up the rocks at their feet to stone Him. He was able to slip away

E. Satan used the guilt of Herod _____ to eradicate Christ (Luke 13:31-34)

The son of Herod the Great was the executioner of John the Baptist. Jesus seemed to have provoked his guilt and therefore the King also put a price on Christ's head.

F. Satan used every _____ to lay hands on and to seize Christ – John 7:44

There was an amazing conspiracy to capture and kill Christ. It could all be summed up by the words of John 7:44, *“And some of them wanted to seize Him, but no one laid hands on Him.”* They were motivated and orchestrated by the dark prince of the power of the air. No one wanted Christ dead more than he. And yet, he and his foot soldier fumbled and failed again and again. But then...

G. Satan used the greed of _____ to betray Christ. – (John 13:25-27)

Satan found a disciple who loved money more than the Messiah. He exploited the situation. He put it in his heart to betray Christ (John 13:2). Further down the line Satan actually entered into and began to possess Judas (John 13:25-27) Judas was certainly a willing party, but the vengeful plan was orchestrated and carried out by Satan himself using Judas as his host. It was only then, in the garden that it could be said, *“And they laid hands on Him, and seized Him.” (Mark 14:46)*

Christ was finally under the devil's diabolical control. He made sure that he suffered immense humiliation. He watched with glee as Christ stumbled up the hill under the dead weight of the Cross and the spikes entered the flesh of his hand. He then sat back and waited for the climax of the show. It typically took a person 2-3 days to die from crucifixion. He was ready to enjoy every minute of it. He even anticipated hearing Christ plead for mercy. But it didn't happen. Somehow Christ still was in control. But even Christ could not forestall the inevitable. He would eventually die. And just as the devil settled down to wait he heard Christ say *“It is finished.”* (John 19:30) and quickly followed by *“And He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit.”* His life wasn't taken from Him. He gave it up only after His work had been finished. Christ was in control. He chose the moment of His own death.

The cross was not the Devil's conquest. The cross was Christ's _____

Why did He choose it? The apostle Peter put it this way, *“For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God...”* (1 Peter 3:18) He died in order to bring us to God. The cross was Christ's choice. He chose it to save you. Will you now choose to receive it?

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

Use this section in your personal or family devotions to better apply the truth.

1. When did you first understand that Christ chose to die for you?
2. What difference did it make to you then?
3. What difference does it make to you now?
4. Is it worth sharing this good news with someone else? Who? When?