

Joy

“These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.” (John 15:11)

God's intention for men everywhere is joy. Satan's counterfeit is sensual pleasure. God offers joy through self-denial. Satan offers pleasure through self-indulgence. God's offer is bona fide, through One who is truth personified. Satan's offer is an empty promise by one whose very name means “deceiver”. God's joy is everlasting, bringing daily peace and strength. Satan's counterfeit is but for a moment, bringing emptiness and despair.

How can one say that God's intention for men everywhere is joy? Look at the misery that has settled over the world like a pall. Look at the wars and the sickness and the hatred and the tornadoes and floods and fires. Hear the cries of the broken and the destitute and hear the screaming sirens in the night.

In the first place, this is not what God intended. He created a world of beauty and love and peace. Satan, at the dawn of time, sought to seize the glory of God for his own selfish ends. ***“How art thou fallen from heaven, 0 Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven. I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.” (Isaiah 14:12, 13)*** Since he was cast down to the ground (or earth, as in the original text), he has sought to make men captives of his earthly realm—to enslave them with the sensual. As the Bible says, he is now the ***“prince (or Archon) of this world.” (John 14:30)*** As with all demagogues, he attempts to demonstrate his waning power and bring men into fearful subjection by the evils that are rampant upon the earth.

Tragically, when he offered his counterfeit pleasures to Adam and Eve in the Garden of God, they were enticed to disobey God and thus to allow a false spirit into their hearts. To this very day, that false spirit has been a corrupting influence in the world. Hear again the Word of God, ***“Wherefore, as by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin: so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” (Romans 5:12)***

God has made His offer of joy and peace in the midst of this misery and despair. ***“These things I have spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.” (John 15:11)*** And again—***“These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)*** What are “these things” that have been spoken? They are the words of Christ. ***“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” (John 3:16-19)***

Do you really want joy and peace? Then come to the Savior. He will free you from the bondage of a life made empty by a world of false promise.