

Luke 3:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

Analysis

The agricultural metaphor—"Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor"—describes Christ's separating work in judgment. The 'fan' (winnowing fork) tosses grain allowing wind to separate wheat from chaff. That the fan is 'in his hand' indicates Christ's active, present work of separation. 'Throughly purge' emphasizes complete, exhaustive separation—Christ's judgment is thorough, not partial. The result: 'gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable'—eternal separation of saved (wheat) and lost (chaff). This teaches Christ's dual role: gathering His people to safety while judging the wicked with eternal fire. The unquenchable fire indicates hell's eternity.

Historical Context

Winnowing was familiar to agricultural listeners—grain thrown in air, wind blowing away light chaff while heavy wheat fell to the floor. This vivid imagery depicted Christ's separating righteous from wicked. The unquenchable fire warned of eternal judgment, not temporary punishment.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. What does the winnowing imagery teach about Christ's thorough judgment?
2. How does Christ simultaneously save His people while judging the wicked?
3. What does 'unquenchable fire' teach about the eternality of hell?

Interlinear Text

οὗ τὸ πτύον ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ
Whose G3588 fan is in G3588 hand his and
G3739 G4425 G1722 G5495 G846 G2532

διακαθᾶριε τὴν ἄλωνα αὐτοῦ καὶ συναξεῖ τὸν
he will throughly purge G3588 floor his and will gather G3588
G1245 G257 G846 G2532 G4863

σῖτον εἰς τὴν ἀποθήκην αὐτοῦ τὸ δὲ ἄχυρον
the wheat into G3588 garner his G3588 but the chaff
G4621 G1519 G596 G846 G1161 G892

κατακάύσει πυρὶ ἀσβέστῳ
he will burn with fire unquenchable
G2618 G4442 G762

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 13:30 (Parallel theme): Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

Jeremiah 15:7 (Parallel theme): And I will fan them with a fan in the gates of the land; I will bereave them of children, I will destroy my people, since they return not from their ways.

Micah 4:12 (Parallel theme): But they know not the thoughts of the LORD, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor.

Psalms 1:4 (Parallel theme): The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

Isaiah 30:24 (Parallel theme): The oxen likewise and the young asses that ear the ground shall eat clean provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan.

Matthew 3:12 (Parallel theme): Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

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