Shalom,

Do you know what a *winnowing fork* (Pepeto) is and what its purpose is?

Let us return to Matthew 3:11-12 (ESV):

> *“I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.*
> *His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”*

Agricultural Context and Spiritual Symbolism

A *winnowing fork*—known in Swahili as *Pepeto*—is a farming tool shaped somewhat like a pitchfork (*uma*). Farmers use it to toss wheat into the air so that the wind blows away the lighter husks (chaff), allowing the heavier grain (wheat) to fall back down,

separated and purified.

Traditionally, many communities use a flat tool (*nyungo*) to winnow grains like rice or wheat, throwing the grain up so the wind separates the chaff. However, wheat farming required the *Pepeto* because the grain mixture was heavy with chaff and impurities. The *Pepeto* enabled a more thorough separation.

Theological Reflection

Spiritually, the wheat represents the Word of God, pure and life-giving, while the chaff represents falsehood, lies, and deception—particularly false dreams, visions, and prophecies that arise especially in the last days.

Jeremiah 23:25-28 (ESV) warns against false prophets:

> *“I have heard what the prophets say who prophesy lies in my name, saying, ‘I had a dream, I had a dream!’*
> *How long shall there be lies in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies, and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart,*

> *who plan to make my people forget my name by their dreams that they tell one another, even as their fathers forgot my name for Baal?*
> *Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let him who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? declares the LORD.”*

The Lord contrasts the Word of God (wheat) with empty, deceptive visions (straw or chaff). False prophecy is worthless in God’s eyes because it does not lead to true repentance or salvation.

The Role of Jesus Christ as the Winnowing Fork

Jesus Christ is Himself the *winnowing fork* who separates true believers—those rooted in His Word—from false teachers and hypocrites who follow lies. This separation is a divine act of judgment and purification.

Theologically, this winnowing signifies the final judgment, where the Holy Spirit distinguishes between what is eternal (wheat) and what is temporal or false (chaff). This theme aligns with Jesus’

teaching on the kingdom of God and eschatology—the study of end times.

Mark 8:36 (ESV) reminds us of the ultimate cost:

> *“For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?”*

False promises of worldly prosperity, when bought at the cost of truth and holiness, lead to eternal loss. The real harvest is not earthly wealth, but eternal life grounded in God’s Word.

The Final Harvest and Judgment

The “harvest” Jesus speaks of is the end of the age, when God will gather His people and judge the wicked.

Matthew 13:29-30, 40-42 (ESV) says:

> *“But he said, ‘No, lest while you gather the weeds you root up the wheat along with them.*
> *Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’...*
> *As therefore the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age.*
> *The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers,*
> *and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

This passage teaches the certainty of divine judgment and the separation of the righteous and the wicked. The righteous—like the wheat—are gathered into God’s eternal kingdom, while the wicked—like chaff—are destroyed.

Conclusion and Prayer

We live in the last days when the *Pepeto* is already passing through the fields of humanity. The Holy Spirit is separating true believers who live by God’s Word from those deceived by false visions.

May the Lord grant us discernment to recognize His Word, faithfulness to follow it, and courage to reject the lies of the enemy.

Let us pray:

“Father, purify Your Church as the farmer purifies his wheat. Help us to be like the wheat, rooted in Your Word, and not like the chaff that is blown away. Send Your Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth and keep us faithful until the day of harvest. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

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