

# THE MESSIAH'S COMING

## LUKE 03: 15-17

### *Introduction*

The message of John the Baptist was powerful, a message for all ages.

- I. He preached the Messiah's coming (vv. 15-17).

### **VI. *Luke 03:15–17 Preaching the Messiah's Coming***

John preached the Messiah's coming. He stressed three points in particular.

1. The Messiah's person. The Messiah was more "worthy" and "more powerful" than he.
    - a. More worthy: John was not worth the rank of a slave before Christ. Slaves were the ones who loosed the sandals and washed the feet of guests. He was as *nothing* before the Lord. What an attitude of humility!
    - b. More powerful: Jesus was mightier in both person (as above) and work (baptism and judgment, v. 16-17).
  2. The Messiah's baptism (See *Baptism*, Lk. 3:16).
  3. The Messiah's judgment. Note these points.
    - a. The *winnowing fork* (pluon) is the Messiah's power to pick up both the wheat and the chaff.
    - b. The "threshing floor" is the earth which will be purged or cleansed of all chaff.
    - c. The "wheat" represents believers who truly repent and bring forth fruit. They will be gathered into His barn (His kingdom or the new heavens and earth).
    - d. The "chaff" represents those who only profess, who are counterfeit wheat. They lie on the floor (the earth) with the wheat, but they are not wheat. They shall be burned with "unquenchable fire." (See Lk. 3:17.) ■
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## LUKE 03:16 BAPTISM

*John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But the one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." Luke 03:16*

The word *baptism* (baptizein) means to dip, to immerse, to submerge, to place into. John's baptism was with water, but Jesus' baptism was "with [en] the Holy Spirit and with fire."

1. John's baptism was both a preparation and a symbol of the spiritual baptism that Jesus was to bring. John's water baptism meant two things.

First, it symbolized cleansing from all sin. A person was being prepared for the cleansing that Christ would provide.

Second, it symbolized separation or dedication. A person was setting his life apart to God in a renewed spirit of dedication. He was committing himself to the Christ about whom John was preaching.

2. Jesus' spiritual baptism is a double baptism. Only one preposition is used for "the Spirit and fire," the preposition "with" or "in."

First, Jesus baptizes the person *with the Spirit*. He dips, immerses, and places the person in the Spirit. A person may be carnal and materialistic, but once he has been baptized into the Spirit by Christ, he becomes spiritually minded (Rom. 8:5-7). The Jews had longed and looked for the day when the Spirit would come. The prophets had predicted His coming time and again; therefore, the people knew exactly what John was predicting (see Ezk. 36:26-27; 37:14; 39:29; Isa. 44:3; Joel 2:28). Note: John's baptism was called "the baptism of repentance"; that is, the person who repented was baptized. There could be no question; it was understood. If one repented and actually turned to the Lord, he was baptized.

Second, Jesus baptized the person *with fire*. Fire has several functions that graphically symbolize the work of Christ. It illuminates, warms, melts, burns, and utterly destroys. The difference between baptism with water and fire is the difference between an outward work and an inward work. Water only cleanses the outside; fire purifies within, that is, the heart. Jesus Christ separates a person from his former life and purifies him within by the fire of His Holy Spirit. It should be noted that in John's mind the "baptism of fire" meant that the Messiah was to destroy the enemies of Israel. It was "the messianic fire of judgment" that was to come from the throne of David. □

**LUKE 03:17 UNQUENCHABLE FIRE (PURI ASBESTO)**

*“...but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” Luke 03:17*

This literally reads “with unquenchable fire.” It is fire that cannot be quenched, snuffed out, extinguished. The idea is that the fire is everlasting, burning on and on and never ending (See *Eternal Fire*, Mt. 25:41). □

**MATHEW 25:41 ETERNAL FIRE (TO PUR TO AIONION)**

*“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’”  
Mathew 25:41*

This literally reads, “fire which is everlasting.” It is a fire that lasts forever, burns on and on. Note the fire is not prepared for men, but for the devil and his angels. God never intended men to spend eternity in everlasting fire. Men who choose to follow the devil in his evil ways are choosing to be with the devil wherever he is. □

# THE BAPTISM OF JESUS: OBEDIENCE AND GOD'S APPROVAL

## LUKE 03:21-22

### *Introduction – Baptism*

Baptism is both obeying God and securing God's approval. This is why Jesus was baptized, and it is why we are to be baptized.

- I. Jesus' obedience (v. 21).
- II. God's signs of approval (v. 22).

### **I. *Luke 03:21 Baptism, Obedience to God***

Baptism is an act of obedience to God. Jesus was obeying God in being baptized. This is seen in two acts.

1. Jesus obeyed God by being baptized with the people. Note the words, "When all the people were being baptized." Some scholars say Jesus was baptized *after* all the people were baptized; others *while* they were being baptized. It does not matter which is factual. The point is this: Jesus was right in the midst of the people, *obeying* God with them. He was doing exactly what God wanted, identifying with the people.

The very fact that the Son of God would be baptized is startling. He was the Author and Finisher of our faith, the Founder of the movement of Christianity. He was the One who was making baptism *possible and effectual* (working) for man. John's baptism was a call for men to take a stand and to become identified with a life of repentance and righteousness. Jesus needed no repentance; He was already perfectly righteous. He was the Purchaser of righteousness, the Ideal Man. His righteousness was the pattern, the very righteousness that could stand for and cover every man. Why then would Jesus be baptized? Very simply, in His own words, "to fulfill all righteousness."

One thing sets these people apart from the rest of the public. They heard John's message and responded, doing exactly what God wanted. They were obeying God's call, doing what was right, obeying righteousness. Now again, note that Jesus was baptized "when all the people were being baptized," right along with them. He was doing at least two things, (See Mt. 3:13; 3:15; Mk. 1:9-11).

- a. He was demonstrating that He, the Son of God, was *fulfilling all righteousness* (See Mt. 5:17-18). He, too, was being obedient to God, *fulfilling every law* of God for man.
  - b. He was demonstrating His humiliation, that He was Man, fully Man. As Man He was required to live obediently to God just as other men were. There was one difference,
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however; Jesus lived a sinless life, and by such He became the Perfect and Ideal Man, the Pattern for all men (See *Jesus, the Son of Man*, Mt. 8:20).

**Thought 1.** Every man should respond to the gospel of God; that is, he should seek God to forgive his sins, repent, and be baptized. This is God's will for every man. Every man should obey God and fulfil all righteousness. Baptism is an act of obedience; it is obeying God right along with other believers.

**Mat 3:13-15** *Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness." Then John consented.*

**Mark 16:16** *"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."*

**John 3:5** *Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit."*

**Thought 2.** No man is above any other man, not in the eyes of God. God's own Son had to obey Him; He had to be baptized as a *sign of obedience* to God. We, too, have to be baptized if we are truly repenting and seeking God to forgive our sins. We are not above God's will and His instructions to "repent and be baptized" (Acts 2:38).

**Acts 2:38** *Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

**Mat 28:19** *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."*

**Acts 22:16** *"And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name."*

2. Jesus obeyed God in prayer. While Jesus was being baptized, He was praying. His mind and thoughts were upon God. He was in fellowship and communion with God. This is as it should be. Why would a person's mind be elsewhere while he is being baptized if he is sincere?

=> Baptism is an *outward*, sign of God's working *within* the heart of a person. The *inward working* and *inward grace of God is sought by prayer*. Thus, *true baptism* is the first act whereby a man shows that he is in communion with God.

=> Baptism, the most significant act of discipleship, will be followed by a changed life. A changed life demonstrates that a person is repenting and seeking God to forgive his sins. Therefore, while a person is being baptized, he is in a spirit of prayer seeking God's grace and favour as he walks out into an alien and wicked world.

=> Baptism launches the new life of the believer. Baptism is to be the first act of the repenting believer, the first confession to the public that a person is going to change his life and live for God. (See *Baptism*, Acts 2:38.) *Baptism is the first public confession of a person's inward prayer of confession to God.* Thus baptism, the outward public confession to man, should follow right upon the heels of the inward private confession to God. The spirit of prayer that started it all should be the same spirit of prayer that finishes it all. The prayer that confessed to God privately should continue right on through to the prayer that confesses to the public at large. In fact, from the very moment of the inward prayer of a person's confession to God, the heart should continue in a spirit of prayer right on through life. The believer's very spirit should be a spirit of continued prayer. Such was Jesus' obedience in prayer. Such is to be our obedience in prayer. An unbroken communion with God in prayer is the ache of God for us.

**Luke 18:1** *"They should always pray and not give up."*

**Rom 12:12** *Faithful in prayer.*

**Eph 6:18** *And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.*

**Phil 4:6** *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.*

**Col 1:3** *We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you.*

**Col 4:2** *Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.*

**1 Th 3:10** *Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith.*

**1 Th 5:17** *Pray continually.*

**James 5:16** *The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.*

### MATHEW 08:20 JESUS, THE SON OF MAN

*Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." **Mathew 08:20***

Jesus is not only what an ordinary man is, a son of man; Jesus is what every man ought to be, the Son of Man Himself. He is the Ideal Man, the Representative Man, the Perfect Man, the Pattern, the Embodiment of everything a man ought to be. Jesus Christ is the perfect picture of a man. Everything God wants a man to be is seen perfectly in Jesus Christ (see Jn. 1:14; Col. 2:9-10; Heb. 1:3.)

The title also means the Ideal Servant of man. It stresses His sympathy for the poor, the broken-hearted, the captives, the blind, the bruised, the outcasts, the bereaved (see Lk. 4:18). Jesus is the Pattern, the Model, the Perfect Example of concern and caring. He served and set a perfect example of how every man ought to serve other men.

Jesus calls Himself "the Son of Man" about eighty times. It is His favourite term. The title 'Son of Man' is probably based upon the Son of Man in Daniel (Dan. 7:13-14). Scripture also gives a picture of Jesus as the heavenly Son of Man contrasted with Adam as the earthly Man (1 Cor. 15:45-47). Each serves as a Representative Man for the human race in God's plan for world history.

**Mat 9:6** *"But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins..." Then he said to the paralytic, "Get up, take your mat and go home."*

**Mat 16:13,16** *When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*

**Mat 20:28** *"Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

**Mark 8:38** *"If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."*

**Luke 19:10** *"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."*

**John 5:26-27** *"For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man."*

**John 13:31-32** *When he was gone, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once."*

**Acts 7:56** *"Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."*

**Rev 1:12-13** *I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lamp stands, and among the lamp stands was someone "like a son of man", dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. □*

## ACTS 02:38 BAPTISM

*Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Acts 02:38*

Baptism is the outward sign, the immediate sign of repentance. It is the physical sign that a person is identifying with Christ. It is the immediate sign that a person is to show before the world that he is really repenting and is now going to obey and live for God. Baptism and repentance are both...

- outward signs
- signs that have to do with behaviour
- signs that show the world that a person is turning his life over to God

Repentance is a command to change one's life. Baptism is a command, the very first command to follow Christ. Baptism is the first command given to those who are repenting. The person who is really repenting must be baptized. He must give testimony to the world and confess to the world that he is repenting by being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (see Mt. 28:19-20). Baptism is not an option. It is as much a command as repentance.

*Mat 28:19 "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."*

*Mark 16:16 "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."*

*Acts 2:38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

*Acts 10:48 So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.*

*Acts 22:16 'And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'*

Now, note a critical point that is often overlooked and neglected. Just because a person changes his life (repents) and is baptized does not mean he is saved. A person can change his life by the power of his own will, by discipline and self-control, by his own effort and works. And he can very simply request to be baptized. Many people have and will continue to do this. Many live what society calls a good, upright, and



moral life and they have been baptized. But there is more to being saved than merely changing one's life and being baptized. What is it? It is the very basis, the very essential to true salvation, to being truly forgiven and receiving the Holy Spirit:

=> It is the essential of faith, of believing "in the name of Jesus Christ."

A person who truly believes and really trusts Jesus does repent and is baptized. But just because a person lives a disciplined and controlled life (repents) and has been baptized does not mean he is truthfully trusting Jesus as his Saviour. True faith - the inward work within the heart, the inward work of really believing *in the name of the Lord Jesus* — is the one absolute essential for being saved.

Now note another critical point that is also overlooked and neglected.

=> Just because a person says he believes in Jesus does not mean he is saved. A person can say and claim anything, and that person can be baptized. But profession and baptism do not save a person any more than a changed life and baptism save a person.

There is more to being saved than professing faith and being baptized. What is it? Again, it is the very basis, the very essential to true salvation, to being truly forgiven and receiving the Holy Spirit.

=> It is the basis, the essential of *repenting* and of doing the very first act of repentance, being baptized.

There is no faith *without true repentance* and there is no forgiveness by God *without trusting or committing* one's life to God's dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And the very first act of following Jesus is that of repenting and being baptized. A person who honestly believes in Jesus Christ will do what He said, repent and be baptized.

This is what Peter was saying in this passage. He did not mention faith, but he was not omitting faith nor eliminating belief in the Lord Jesus as essential to salvation. The rest of Scripture cannot be ignored in looking at this verse just as this verse and others like it cannot be ignored by the passages that stress faith alone. Common sense tells us that a person who truly believes something acts upon that thing. *Behaviour follows true belief*. But similarly, common sense tells us that behaviour can be changed by raw effort and discipline. A person can change because he thinks he should change and not because someone else demands change.

Paul stressed the same point in that classic passage of his (Rom. 6:3-4), and the point is very significant. A believer (true believer) is said to be "*baptized*" [immersed] into the death of Christ.

**Rom 6:3-4** *Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*

Now note what Paul has just said: when a person is baptized, he is “baptized into His [Jesus'] death” in the same way he is immersed (identified) into the resurrection of Christ. Baptism is an act by which one identifies with Christ. He counts himself as having died *in* Christ's death and as having risen *in* Christ's resurrection; as living and moving and having his being *in* Christ even as Christ lived and moved and had His being in God. Christ's death and resurrection and life becomes the believer's death and resurrection and life. The believer treats and judges himself as having been “crucified with Christ, nevertheless living; yet not himself, but Christ living in him” (Gal. 2:20).

In conclusion, history has shown that this point needs to be stressed and re-stressed.

=> A person can repent, change his own life and be baptized (by his own effort and works) without ever trusting Christ, without really believing in Christ.

=> But a person cannot trust, cannot really believe in Christ without repenting and following Christ in the very first act of repentance, that of being baptized. True faith and honest belief always mean that a person repents and is baptized. To believe is to follow (obey) Christ and to be baptized.

**Heb 5:9** *And, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.*

**John 3:36** *“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.”* □

## **II. Luke 03:22 Securing God's Approval**

Baptism secures God's approval. When a person is baptized, God is very pleased, for the person is *obeying* and *following* in the steps of Jesus. Jesus' baptism pleased God. God showed His approval in three ways.

1. The heavens were opened (v. 21). This was probably for two purposes.
  - a. To give Jesus a very special sight and sense of God's glory and presence. The Lord's baptism was the launch of His ministry to men. He needed a very special glimpse and sense of God's glory and presence. He needed the stamp of God's approval and power (see Acts 7:56; Ezk. 1:1).

- b. To reveal to John and perhaps to the others standing there (if the opening of heaven were visible to all) that Jesus was truly the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (Jn. 1:29).
2. The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus “in a bodily form like a dove.” The dove was a sacred bird to the Jews. It was a symbol of peace and gentleness, of purity and innocence, but even more significant it was often identified with the Spirit of God. When the dove descended upon Jesus, it symbolized the Spirit of God Himself descending upon Jesus. He was descending upon Jesus to identify Jesus as the Messiah and to endue Jesus with the power of God (See Mk. 1:9-10). John went out of his way to stress that the Spirit's descent upon Jesus was unique: He abode (Jn. 1:32) and He remained upon Jesus (Jn. 1:33). The Holy Spirit entered the life of Jesus once for all, permanently and powerfully, in His full manifestation and unlimited power.
3. The voice of God was heard. The heavens were opened: (Mt. 3:16-17). This may be a scene of the clouds being rolled back and the dove descending from the heavens (clouds and sky). Or it may be some special vision given to Jesus and John, revealing that God was opening up heaven for the full approval and manifestation of God's power upon His Son. (See Eph. 1:1; Act. 7:56.)

**Thought 1.** When we genuinely obey God and are baptized, God is pleased. We also secure His approval in the same three ways.

- 1) God opens heaven up to us and gives us a very special sense of His presence, a sense of His approval, a sense that we are pleasing Him immensely.

*Eph 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.*

*Eph 2:4-6 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.*

- 2) God manifests and reveals His Spirit to us in a very special sense. We are obeying Him, and significant moments of obedience bring special manifestations of the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the very special manifestation of Christ within the believer (Jn. 14:21). Apparently, this refers to very special manifestations of the Lord to the heart of the believer, those very special times when there is a deep consciousness of love between the Lord and His dear follower (see *Jesus Shows Himself*, Jn. 14:21). This is bound to be what Christ means, for He has already spoken about His personal presence within the believer (Jn. 18-20). When believers go through terrible trials and experience — severe crises, God knows and He loves and cares;

so He moves to meet the need of His dear children. He moves within the believer's heart, manifesting His presence and giving a deep sense of His love and care, helping and giving confidence, forgiveness, and assurance — giving whatever the believer needs. The depth of the experience and the intensity and emotion of the *special manifestation* depends upon the need of the believer. God knows and loves His dear child perfectly, so He gives whatever experience and depth of emotion are needed to meet the need of His child. We must always remember that God loves each one of us so much He will do whatever is needed...

- to lift us up
- to strengthen us
- to conform us to the image of His dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ

**John 14:21** *“Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.”*

**1 Cor 2:9-10** *However, as it is written: “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him” — but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.*

**Eph 1:7-10** *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfilment — to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.*

**Col 1:26-27** *The mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

3) God's Word is heard. The fact that we are baptized is a sign that we have heard His command to be baptized, and because we are obeying Him, He continues to speak to us day by day as we seek His will in the Bible and prayer.

**Rev 3:20** *“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.”*

**1 John 1:3** *We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. ■*

**JOHN 14:21 JESUS CHRIST SHOWS HIMSELF;  
MANIFESTATION (PHANEROO; EMPHANIZO)**

*“Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.” **John 14:21***

When used in the sense of an unveiling or revelation, it suggests that a new thing has come to light; that something never known by man before is made known. Some mystery has now been revealed. It is something that cannot be discovered by man's reason or wisdom. It is a mystery that is hidden from man and beyond his grasp. Here in Jn. 14:21-22, it means that Jesus' presence is revealed (brought to light), illuminated, manifested, quickened in the life of the believer. It means that He shows, *manifests*, Himself to His disciples in a very special way. He discloses His person, His nature, His goodness. He illuminates Himself *within* their hearts and lives. He gives a very special consciousness within their souls. (See *Pentacost*, Acts 2:1-4.)

**John 7:38-39** *“Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.*

**John 14:21-23** *“Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.” Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?” Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”*

**Acts 2:4** *All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*

**Acts 4:31** *After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.*

**Acts 13:52** *And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.*

**Eph 5:18** *Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. □*