

# “THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

## Are Necessary Inferences Necessary?

By Joe R. Price

Yes, necessary inferences are necessary to understand and apply the word of God. Those who continue to believe we must have Bible authority for whatever we do **“in word or deed”** respect necessary inferences as essential to understanding God’s will (Col. 3:17).

Conversely, those who reject God-revealed patterns oppose using necessary inferences to know and apply God’s binding approval of what we teach and do. They say necessary inferences are the assumptions of fallible men, legalists who bind opinions where God has not bound.

An inference is a conclusion drawn by applying reason and logic to known data (what is said or done). We infer it is cold outside if we see someone wearing a winter coat, hat, and gloves. But, is it a necessary inference? Not if other possibilities exist given the facts that are known.

A necessary inference is not a conclusion that is probably true, mostly true, possibly true, or maybe true. It is the only possible conclusion from the given facts. “An inference is said to be necessary if another and a different inference cannot be reasonably drawn from the facts stated” ([uslegal.com](http://uslegal.com)). A necessary inference is a conclusion that is irresistible from the stated facts. It is necessary. For example, if it is raining we necessarily conclude there must be clouds in the sky. That is a necessary inference drawn from the fact that rain is falling from the sky. Rain falls from clouds. Our inference is inescapable (necessary), and the truth we deduce about clouds being present when rain is falling cannot be successfully contradicted.

Understanding and applying the Scriptures also involves drawing conclusions from what is written. When a conclusion is irresistible based on what is revealed, it is a necessary conclusion.

We necessarily infer that God existed before creation from the stated fact that **“in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”** (Gen. 1:1). Is God’s existence before creation binding truth? Yes.

We necessarily infer that to be baptized, one must go down into the water from the stated fact that **“When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water”** (Matt. 3:16). Is going into the water to be baptized binding truth? Yes.

We necessarily infer that preaching Jesus includes preaching baptism from the stated fact that when Philip **“preached Jesus,”** the Ethiopian asked what prevented him from being baptized (Acts 8:35-36). Is preaching water baptism as a part of preaching Jesus binding truth? Yes.

Jesus used necessary inferences to teach the truth about resurrection. He told the Sadducees that from the facts given in the burning bush passage, they should have drawn the necessary conclusion that the dead rise (Mk. 12:26-27). God is (not “was”) the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, therefore, death did not end their existence. The Sadducees were **“greatly mistaken.”** Jesus said they did not know the Scriptures because they did not draw this necessary inference (Matt. 22:29). The inference is necessary and the resurrection is binding truth.

The apostles used necessary inferences to teach Gentiles are saved without binding the law of Moses and circumcision. God worked many miracles through Paul and Barnabas among the Gentiles as they preached salvation by faith without circumcision (Acts 15:11-12). These miracles confirmed their message (Acts 14:3; Mk.

16:20). Therefore, we necessarily infer God does not bind circumcision on Gentiles. Clearly, they used a necessary inference to bind truth and expose error.

Jesus expected His disciples to use necessary inferences to understand truth. In Matthew 16:5-12, He told them to remember the facts of His bread miracles, and then they **“understood”** His warning against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees was about their doctrine and not the leaven of bread (v. 11-12). They understood this binding warning by making a necessary inference. So can we.

A necessary inference does not bind an opinion. It is an inescapable conclusion drawn from what God’s word says. (The Bible is full of them.) Necessary inferences are about judging what is right from the facts given in God’s word. If we can understand weather signs and draw valid conclusions, we can and must **“judge what is right”** when God’s word speaks (Lk. 12:54-57; 1 Pet. 4:11). – *The Spirit’s Sword*, January 24, 2021. ■

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### **“Who Is On the Lord’s Side?”**

By Tommy L. McClure

The above question was asked by Moses after the Israelites had worshiped the golden calf (Ex. 32:26). It is a question which every person should seriously consider with respect to his own status now. Are we really on the Lord’s side?

The question itself implies the possibility of being on a side other than the Lord’s. The other side, of course, is the side of Satan. All responsible beings are on one or the other of these two sides. Though many try to “play both sides right down the middle” such cannot really be done. The Lord declared, **“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon”** (Matt. 6:24). He further said, **“He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth with me scattereth abroad”** (Matt. 12:30). Notice the word **“with”** in the above statement! The original language signifies **“to be with one i.e. on one’s side”** (Thayer, p. 403). Often we have heard people say, “I am *for* the Lord,” or “I am *for* God’s people.” But many who make such statements are not really *with* the Lord in the sense of actually participating with them in the work of God and the fight for truth. When will people learn that it is not enough to stand apart from the battle or the work and merely say, “I am for the Lord”? Friend, which of these two words correctly represents you—“FOR” or “WITH”? Are you really on the Lord’s side? Really *with* him, or merely *for* Him?

To be on the Lord’s side, it is necessary that one leave (be delivered from) the kingdom of Satan. The idea of being a loyal subject of Christ while one’s citizenship is in Satan’s kingdom is ridiculous! Writing to the Colossians Paul said, **“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son”** (Col. 1:12, 13). Peter told the Christians of his day that they had been called **“out of darkness into His marvelous light”** (1 Pet. 2:9). This involved the purifying of their souls in obeying the truth, **“being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever”** (1 Pet. 1:22, 23). Those who have not done this are not yet on the Lord’s side!

Being on the Lord’s side also necessitates doing those things which are demanded of the Lord’s people. The Lord said, **“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me”** (Lk. 9:23). He instructs us to take His yoke upon us (Matt. 11:28-30), meaning that we are to perform whatever service He demands. Note that the cross bearing is a daily affair. Those who think they can play the Devil’s side during the week, and switch to the Lord’s side on Sunday and go to heaven in the world to come are woefully deceived! Note also that the Lord demands that we FOLLOW Him—not RUN BEFORE Him in presumptuous deeds. Those on the Lord’s side do not go beyond, but abide in the doctrine of Christ (See 2 Jn. 9). ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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