

# “THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

## The Kingdom Is The Church

By Terry Sanders

The first preaching of Jesus is found in Matthew 4:17, *“From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”* The kingdom was near, in regard to time, not distance. He told His disciples, *“Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power”* (Mark 9:1). Some would see the kingdom arrive in their lifetime.

We learn the kingdom existed in the first century. Paul wrote in Colossians 1:13, *“He has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.”* When Paul said *“us”* he meant himself and the church at Colossae. Therefore, the kingdom and the church are one and the same.

Today many do not believe the kingdom has come and are awaiting its arrival. This would mean that none of the disciples, Paul, or the brethren at Colossae were in the kingdom. Yet, we have seen that they were. If you are waiting for something to arrive that is already here, you just might miss it all together. ■

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## Rejoice in the Lord Always

By Joe R. Price

Philippians is the epistle of joy. Its theme is “joy in Christ.” Ironically, it was written while Paul was imprisoned for his faith (Phil. 1:12-17). But, instead of considering his circumstance a hardship, he was content to view his imprisonment as a sharing in the sacrifice and service of fellow saints (Phil. 4:11; 2:17). Paul rejoiced in his present trials and the advantages that resulted from them (Phil. 1:12-14).

The letter to the Philippians teaches us to live in joy and contentment. Oh, how we need to learn that lesson! With eyes of faith, we see beyond the trials of the moment to the spiritual and eternal benefits they yield to the faithful (1 Pet. 1:6-9; 2 Cor. 4:16-18). Like the Philippians, we need the discernment for which Paul prayed so we may live joyful, contented lives (Phil. 1:9-10). Spiritual discernment helps us:

- (1) Distinguish between right and wrong so that we may live with God’s approval and appear before Christ without offense (1:10-11),
- (2) Live for Christ and strive together for the faith of the gospel (1:21, 27),
- (3) Have the mind of Christ (2:1-5),
- (4) Press on to the heavenly goal (3:12-16),
- (5) Always rejoice in the Lord (4:4).

The apostle Paul and others set worthy examples for us to follow (Phil. 4:9; 3:17). Just as he was able to rejoice in his bonds, we can rejoice in the trials we face for Christ’s sake. And, like Paul, we are blessed when we do (Matt. 5:10-12).

The letter to the Philippians gives us many reasons to rejoice in the Lord. If these reasons do not presently describe your joy in Christ, you can change that. Increase your involvement in spiritual things, and your joy for them will also increase. This epistle teaches us to find joy in:

- (1) Fellowship in spreading the gospel (1:3-5),
- (2) Proclaiming Christ (1:18),
- (3) The growth of faith (1:25),
- (4) Unity with brethren (2:1-4),
- (5) Sacrificial service for Christ and brethren (2:17-18),
- (6) Brotherly safety and companionship (2:28),
- (7) The fruit of one's labors for Christ (2:16; 4:1),
- (8) The Lord hearing and answering our prayers and granting us peace (4:4-7),
- (9) Actions of brotherly love and concern (4:10).

Meditate often on these virtuous, praiseworthy things, for they are undoubtedly true, noble, just, pure, lovely, and of good report (Phil. 4:8). These meditations protect us from being distracted away from our joy in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:4-7, 10-11; 1:25).

***"Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say, rejoice!"*** (Phil. 4:4) ■

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## Binding Where God Didn't Bind

By Johnie Edwards

A failure to know just what the Bible really says causes many to bind that which God has not bound! Jesus told the apostles that they could only ***"bind on earth"*** what had been ***"bound in heaven"*** (Matt. 16:19). A good example of binding where the Lord had not bound is in the case of the word ***"cup"*** in regard to partaking of the Lord's supper. Some think the Bible refers to a container when the word ***"cup"*** is used.

***"And He Took The Cup."*** Jesus was eating the passover feast as he instituted the Lord's supper (Matt. 26:19-20). Matthew 26:27 says, ***"he took the cup."*** Just what did Jesus take when he took the cup? Does the word ***"cup"*** refer to a container or its contents? Let's see.

***"Gave Thanks."*** Jesus gave ***"thanks"*** (Matt. 26:27). For what did Jesus give thanks, a container or the contents? Whatever Jesus gave thanks for, he said, ***"Drink it"*** (Matt. 26:27).

***"This Cup."*** Mark records Jesus saying, ***"The cup is my blood of the New Testament"*** (Mark 4:23-24). What is that refers to the blood, the container or the contents? Let the Bible answer: Jesus said this cup is ***"the fruit of the vine"*** (Mark 14:25). That ought to settle it, that the ***"cup"*** does not refer to a container but to the fruit of the vine!

***"Divide The Cup."*** Luke's account says, ***"And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves"*** (Luke 22:17). Whatever the ***"cup"*** is, it could be divided! Did they divide a container or contents of a container? We are not interested as to what men think it was. We want to know what the Lord says the cup was. Jesus said the ***"cup"*** is the ***"fruit of the vine"*** (Luke 22:18).

***"Drink The Cup."*** Paul received instructions about the Lord's supper from the Lord. Just what did the Lord tell Paul about the cup? ***"After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood...For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come"*** (1 Cor. 11:23-26). The ***"cup"*** was something that could be ***"supped"*** and could be drunk! Let me ask you, how would you go about drinking a cup? Just like a mother who says, "I raised my babies on the bottle." Did the babies drink a bottle or the contents of the bottle? Come on now. Don't try to tell me they drank a glass or plastic bottle! The Bible binds only one cup, the fruit of the vine. Whether we drink the fruit of the vine out of one container or a hundred, we are still just doing what the Lord said do, drinking the cup. Emphasis is put on the manner in which the Lord's supper is observed, not how many containers (1 Cor. 11:27-29). ■

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

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