

Sunday, January 2, 2022—The Kingdom of God in Pauline Theology

Introduction

- We have before us this morning a two-part task in Colossians 4:11.
- First, I want you to understand the verse as it is written in the context it appears in light of the preceding verses.
- Second, we need to understand Paul's usage of the phrase the kingdom of God compared with how it is used in other parts of the Bible.

Colossians 4:11

- **And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.**
- Notice that the verse begins with the word, “and” which connects Justus to the list of three men that began in verse 10.
- You can see this very plainly if you read verse 10, skip the parentheses, and continue reading in verse 11.
- Justus was a common name in the first century, but this appears to be the only time the Bible mentions this individual.
 - Acts 1:23
 - Acts 18:7
- Colossians 4:11—with reference to the foregoing series of men, Aristarchus, John Mark, and Justus Paul clearly identifies them as being part of the circumcision.
- What does Paul mean when makes this statement?
 - Colossians 3:11
 - Colossians 2:11
 - Galatians 5:6, 6:15
- If in the body of Christ, there is no circumcision or uncircumcision the simple fact that Paul identifies these three men as being “of the circumcision” is significant.
- It is highly likely that these men got saved under the preaching of the gospel of the circumcision i.e., Peter's gospel and later came to see what God was now doing through

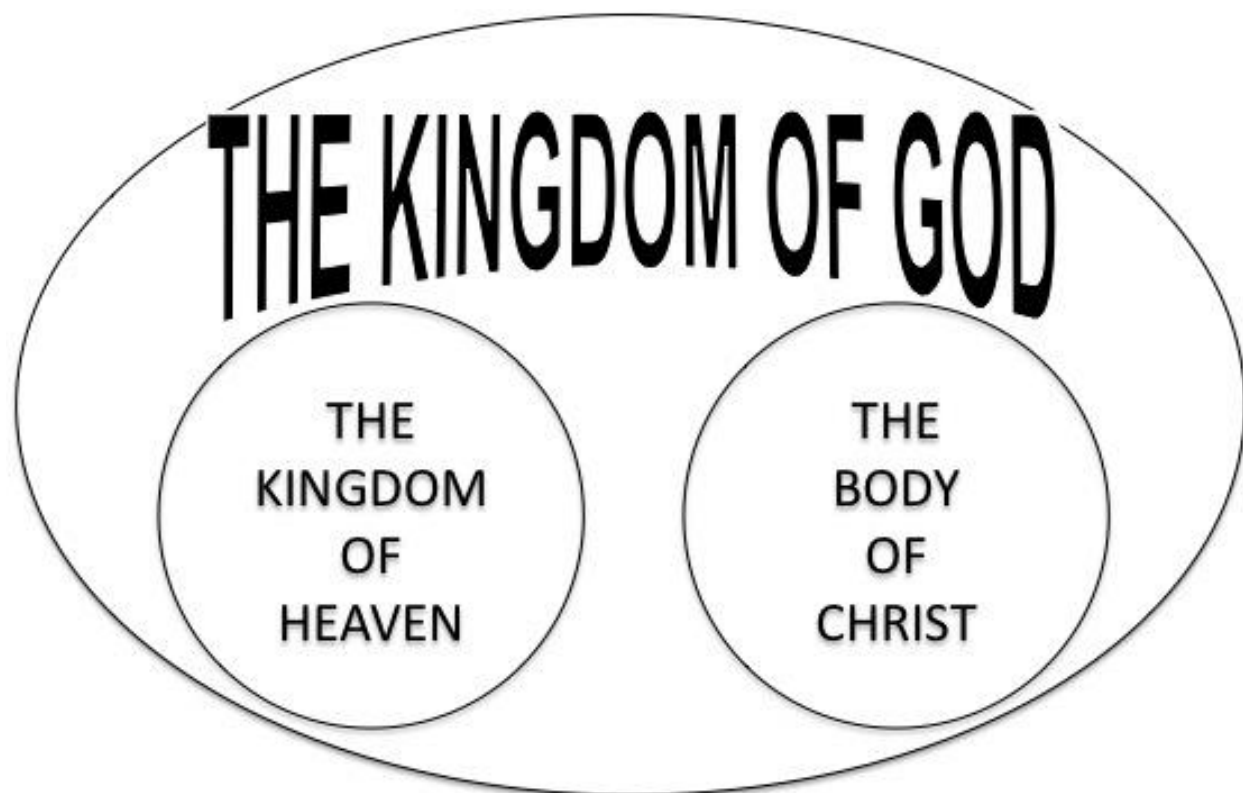
Paul ministry with the gentiles. Rather than waiting for a kingdom that was not coming these men and partnered with Paul to assist in his ministry among the gentiles.

- Paul calls these men his “fellowworkers” unto the kingdom of God. Taken with the pervious phrase these three men were the only members of the circumcision that choose to partner with Paul in the ministry.
- When Paul became discouraged by the response of the Jewish people to the gospel of the grace of God he was exhorted, consoled, and comforted by these three “fellowworkers” of the circumcision.

The Kingdom of God in Pauline Theology

- Paul’s use of the term “kingdom of God” has been used by many to try and trip up grace believers. Consider the following Pauline occurrences:
 - I Corinthians 4:20
 - I Corinthians 6:9-10
 - I Corinthians 15:50
 - Galatians 5:21
 - Ephesians 5:5
 - I Thessalonians 2:12
 - II Thessalonians 1:5
- You hear a lot of talk on Christian TV and radio about building the kingdom of God or ushering in the kingdom of God. To understand Paul’s usage of the term we first need to understand what the kingdom of God actually is.
- In the gospels the phrases the “kingdom of heaven” and the “kingdom of God” are talking about the same thing and are therefore used interchangeably.
 - Matthew 3:2—“kingdom of heaven”
 - Matthew 4:17, 23—the expression “kingdom of heaven” appears 32 times in Matthew. No other N.T. writer used the expression “kingdom of heaven.” Matthew also uses the expression “kingdom of God” 5 times interchangeably with “kingdom of heaven.”
 - Matthew 6:33; 12:28; 19:24; 21:31, 43

- Consider the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7 as a case in point. The expressions are used interchangeably.
 - Matthew 5:20—“enter into the kingdom of heaven”
 - Matthew 6:33—“the kingdom of God”
 - Matthew 7:21—“enter into the kingdom of heaven”
- Mark 1:14-15—Mark reports Jesus was preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God. Compare Mark 1:15 with Matthew 4:17.
- This kingdom was prophesied to Israel in the Old Testament:
 - II Samuel 7:12-16
 - Isaiah 9:6-7
 - Daniel 2:44
 - Daniel 9:24-26
 - Luke 1:67-73
 - Luke 19:41-44
 - Acts 1:6—he does not correct their understanding
 - Acts 2:36-38
 - Acts 3:18-21
 - Matthew 25:34
- What happened to this kingdom? It has not yet been established. Why because God interrupted the prophetic program and temporarily set Israel aside because of their unbelief so that he could begin forming the body of Christ and accomplish his secret purpose regarding the heavenly places.
- From Paul we learn that there is more to the “kingdom of God” than the earth rather we see God the father’s desire not only to have the preeminence in the earth but also in the heavenly places.



- Colossians 1:16-19—through the revelation of the mystery God has revealed his plan not only to redeem the governmental structures of the earth back to himself but also the heavenly places.
- Ephesians 1:10—in the dispensation of the fulness of times all things in heaven and earth will be centered under the authority and headship of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul extends the “kingdom of God” into the heaven places through the revelation of the mystery.
 - Ephesians 3:11—the eternal purpose of God
- Luke 14:15—Romans 14:17