

Diagram of Col. 1.3-8 (English translation):

1.1.3 **We give thanks to God**



1.7

|  
just as you learned  
from Epaphras

beloved  
our...fellow servant  
who is a faithful servant of Christ  
in your behalf  
who has shown us your love  
also  
in the Spirit.

1.8

One limitation of this procedure surfaces here. It is clear that the relative clause ἀφ' ἧς ἡμέρας ἠκούσατε καὶ ἐπέγνωτε τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ, "from the very day you heard and grasped the grace of God in Truth," is parallel to the preceding relative clause ἣν προηκούσατε ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῆς ἀληθείας τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, which you heard beforehand in the Word of Truth, the Gospel." That is, both reference the initial ministry of Epaphras at Colossae. Yet the function of this relative clause is adverbial and most likely modifies adverbially the verbal construction ἐστὶν καρποφορούμενον καὶ αὐξανόμενον, "is bearing fruit and growing." Both relative clauses depict the initial evangelization of the Colossians by Epaphras. Thus together they become an interesting characterization of that ministry by Epaphras. In the first clause, hope came embedded in the Word of Truth, which Paul labels as Gospel. But in the second clause this same message gave them comprehension of God's grace. In a roundabout way, Paul characterizes Gospel, as the Word of Truth. This contains both hope for the future, as well as faith in Christ and love for others. At the heart of this Gospel message is God's grace that favors humanity with the opportunity to experience life changing transformation of their life.