



A new creation focus through Colossians ...

## Bearing Fruit

The Bible reveals a carefully nurtured and orchestrated plan to reach all of mankind. The first consistent traction in God's interaction with the human race began with Abraham, through whom the nation of Israel would be descended, and through whom would come Jesus the Christ. One of the most interesting points concerning Abraham is the promise that was given to him, and, by believing in this promise, the patriarch was justified before God: "A father of many nations [Gentiles] have I made you" (Romans 4:17). The "father of the faithful"

had faith that God would execute this promise through Isaac and hence was willing to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, believing that God would raise him from the dead in order to make good his offer to Abraham. Eventually, after all the appropriate groundwork had been laid, the Father sent Jesus to the earth as the Savior — not only of the descendants of Israel, but of all the peoples of the world. By the time that the apostle Paul writes to the Colossian brethren, the gospel was already reaching to the uttermost parts of the earth.

- **The gospel has come** — The gospel (the *evangel*, the "good news") is not limited to the mere "death, burial, and resurrection" of Jesus Christ. The gospel of the Christ, from the time it was first preached as recorded in Acts chapter two, includes the accounts of His appearances over a period of 40 days on earth leading up to the day He was lifted off earth, and includes His ascension into heaven and all the great events connected with His accession to the throne. The gospel is even more than just the facts about Jesus to be believed; the gospel must be obeyed as well, including immersion into Christ. The apostle Paul is grateful for the distribution of the message, as he describes it, "the word of truth, the gospel, which has come to you" (Colossians 1:6).
- **All the world** — God plans, God executes, and He executes on time! His plan — which He ordained before the foundation of the world, and which began to gain traction through Abraham — entered its final stage ("the last days") in connection with Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension. The gospel was first preached in Jerusalem, then in Judea and Samaria, and then began to go the "remotest part of the earth." The word of truth, then, had come to Colossae probably about the time of Paul's second missionary journey. After commenting on the coming of the gospel to Colossae, the apostle adds, "just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing." Here the Holy Spirit defines "bearing fruit"; it has to do with the gospel being taught and souls being saved. How exciting it was at that point in the history of God's making! In the midst of great persecution and opposition from the Jews, the gospel was *constantly* spreading.
- **Working in you** — The word of truth not only is the agent in saving souls, but it also continues to work in changing the saint into the character of Christ. Paul, in writing to the Thessalonian brethren, stated that the gospel "is the word of God, which performs its work in you who believe" (1 Thessalonians 2:13). Likewise the word of truth was working in the Colossian Christians, as Paul notes in commenting on the increase in all the world, "even as it has *in you* since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth."

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The gospel of Christ is truly amazing. Furthermore, the more a person can ponder over its plan, its growth, and its effects, the more clearly amazing it is. The word of truth, in spite of massive opposition from the forces of darkness, continues to reach into a pagan or confused denominational world, and draw truth seekers into its marvelous light. Moreover, after pulling them out of the muck, the gospel begins to transform its believers into the likeness of the character of Christ, and produce of the love of God in them. How great and how awesome is our God!

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