

2 Timothy 4:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withheld our words.

Analysis

Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withheld our words. Paul continues warning about Alexander. "Of whom be thou ware also" (hon kai sy phylassou, ðn kai sù ðuðlássov). Phylassō (φυλάσσω) means guard against, be on guard, watch out for. Present imperative demands ongoing vigilance. "Also" (kai, καί) suggests Alexander has history of opposition known to Timothy, and Paul reinforces the warning. Believers must maintain discernment about dangerous people, neither naively trusting everyone nor becoming paranoid, but wisely recognizing genuine threats.

The reason: "for he hath greatly withheld our words" (lian gar antestē tois hēmeterois logois, λίαν γὰρ ἀντέστη τοῖς ἡμετέροις λόγοις). Lian (λίαν) means greatly, exceedingly—Alexander wasn't mild opponent but vigorous adversary. Anthistēmi (ἀνθίστημι) means oppose, resist, withstand—same verb describing opposition to Moses (3:8) and truth (3:8). "Our words" (tois hēmeterois logois, τοῖς ἡμετέροις λόγοις) refers to apostolic teaching, the gospel message. Alexander opposed not personal opinions but revealed truth.

This verse teaches important principle: opposition to gospel truth requires warning others. Some teach that love never warns, never calls out opponents, never names names. Paul disagrees. When someone actively opposes truth and harms believers, love demands warning the flock. Shepherds must identify wolves, not merely teach positively while ignoring dangers. However, warning should be factual (not slanderous), necessary (protecting others, not merely venting), and measured

(appropriate to actual threat). Paul's example balances grace toward enemies with responsibility to warn the vulnerable.

Historical Context

Early Christians faced opposition from multiple sources: Jewish leaders, pagan authorities, and apostate former believers like Alexander. The most dangerous opponents were often those who knew Christian teaching well enough to effectively oppose and twist it. Alexander, possibly former believer, had inside knowledge making his opposition especially dangerous. Paul's warning helped churches recognize and avoid him. Contemporary application: the most dangerous false teachers often come from within, knowing Christian vocabulary while teaching contrary doctrine. Believers must develop discernment to recognize such threats.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. From whom should you 'be ware'—what specific false teachers or dangerous influencers threaten biblical truth today?
2. How can you develop discernment to recognize when opposition moves from honest disagreement to dangerous attacks on truth requiring warnings?
3. In what situations is warning others about dangerous people or teachings the most loving action, despite cultural pressure toward uncritical tolerance?

Interlinear Text

ὅν	καὶ	σὺ	φυλάσσου	λίαν	γὰρ	ἀνθέστηκεν	τοῖς
Of whom	also	thou	be	greatly	for	he hath	
G3739	G2532	G4771	G5442	G3029	G1063	G436	G3588
ἡμετέροις λόγοις							
our	words						
G2251	G3056						

Additional Cross-References

2 Timothy 3:8 (Parallel theme): Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

Philippians 3:2 (Parallel theme): Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.

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