

Colossians 2:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;

Analysis

For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh. Paul reveals his agōna (ἀγῶνα, "conflict/struggle")—the same athletic term from 1:29, depicting intense spiritual warfare through prayer and pastoral concern. Though physically absent from Colossae, Paul engages in fierce intercessory battle for churches facing doctrinal danger, proving that ministry transcends geography through prayer.

The inclusion of "Laodicea" and "as many as have not seen my face" indicates regional crisis. Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis formed a triangle of cities in the Lycus Valley (4:13), all threatened by similar heresy. Paul's conflict extends to believers he'd never met personally, demonstrating apostolic concern for doctrinal purity throughout Christ's church, not merely congregations under direct oversight.

Historical Context

Laodicea, seven miles from Colossae, was a wealthy banking and textile center, later home to one of the seven churches in Revelation (3:14-22), rebuked for lukewarmness. The Lycus Valley's commercial prosperity and religious diversity created fertile ground for syncretistic teaching blending various spiritual traditions. Paul's warning protected multiple congregations from related errors.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. For whom do you maintain 'great conflict' in prayer, even if you've never met them personally?
2. How seriously do you take doctrinal error in churches beyond your immediate community?
3. What spiritual struggles consume your prayer life—personal comfort or others' spiritual welfare?

Interlinear Text

Θέλω γὰρ ὑμᾶς εἰδέναι ἠλίκον ἀγῶνα ἔχω περὶ ὑμῶν
I would For that ye knew what great conflict I have for you
G2309 G1063 G5209 G1492 G2245 G73 G2192 G4012 G5216

καὶ τῶν ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ καὶ ὅσοι οὐχ
and for them at Laodicea and for as many as not
G2532 G3588 G1722 G2993 G2532 G3745 G3756

ἐωράκασι τὸ πρόσωπόν μου ἐν σαρκί
have face my for them at the flesh
G3708 G3588 G4383 G3450 G1722 G4561

Additional Cross-References

Colossians 1:29 (Parallel theme): Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

Philippians 1:30 (Parallel theme): Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

Revelation 1:11 (Parallel theme): Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

Acts 20:38 (Parallel theme): Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.

Colossians 1:24 (Parallel theme): Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church: