

Colossians 4:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.

Analysis

For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis. Paul testifies to Epaphras's devoted ministry. "I bear him record" (martyrō gar autō, μαρτυρῶ γὰρ αὐτῷ) means "I testify concerning him"—Paul witnesses Epaphras's character and labor. "That he hath a great zeal" (hoti echei polyn ponon, ὅτι ἔχει πολὺν πόνον) literally "much labor/toil," describing intense, exhausting effort for others' spiritual good.

Epaphras's concern extended beyond Colossae to neighboring cities: Laodicea and Hierapolis, forming the Lycus Valley triangle. This regional ministry demonstrates comprehensive pastoral concern for entire area threatened by similar heresies. Faithful pastors don't limit care to immediate congregation but engage wider church health, recognizing gospel's corporate nature transcending local boundaries.

Historical Context

The three cities—Colossae, Laodicea, Hierapolis—were connected commercially and culturally, facing similar religious pressures from mixed pagan-Jewish-philosophical environment. Epaphras's ministry to all three suggests coordinated evangelistic/pastoral strategy and recognition that doctrinal errors spread regionally, requiring comprehensive response. Later church history confirms Laodicea's spiritual struggles (Revelation 3:14-22).

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does your pastoral concern extend beyond immediate circle to wider church and region?
2. What evidence of 'great zeal' for others' spiritual welfare exists in your life and ministry?
3. How do you balance local church commitment with concern for broader Christian community?

Interlinear Text

μαρτυρῶ	γὰρ	αὐτῷ	ὅτι	ἔχει	ζῆλον	πολὺν	ὑπὲρ	ὑμῶν
I bear	For	him	that	he hath	zeal	a great	for	you
G3140	G1063	G846	G3754	G2192	G2205	G4183	G5228	G5216
καὶ	τῶν	ἐν	Λαοδικείᾳ	καὶ	τῶν	ἐν	Ἱεραπόλει	
and	G3588	them in	Laodicea	and	G3588	them in	Hierapolis	
G2532		G1722	G2993	G2532		G1722	G2404	

Additional Cross-References

Colossians 2:1 (Parallel theme): 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;