

1 Corinthians 16:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand.

Analysis

The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand—Ho aspasmos tē emē cheiri Paulou (ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ Παύλου, "the greeting with my own hand, Paul's"). Ancient authors typically dictated letters to scribes (amanuenses), but added personal greetings or authentication in their own handwriting (Galatians 6:11, Colossians 4:18, 2 Thessalonians 3:17, Philemon 1:19). This handwritten note proved authenticity and added personal warmth, like signing a typed letter today.

Paul's practice of including autograph greetings countered forgery (2 Thessalonians 2:2 warns of forged Pauline letters) and added personal touch to doctrinally dense or corrective letters. Despite correcting Corinthian errors through 16 chapters, Paul ends personally, affirming relationship. The personal signature transformed a formal epistle into intimate pastoral communication.

Historical Context

Ancient scribes (Roman librarii, Greek grammateis) were professional letter writers. Romans 16:22 identifies Tertius as the scribe for Romans. Educated people dictated letters for speed and scribal expertise, but personal signatures authenticated documents. Paul's handwritten greetings may also reflect his eye problems (Galatians 4:13-15, 6:11 mentions "large letters"), making writing difficult but personally significant.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. Why does Paul emphasize that his greeting is in his own handwriting—what does this add to the letter?
2. How does the personal signature transform the pastoral tone from corrective to affectionate?
3. What modern equivalents exist for Paul's handwritten authentication in an age of digital communication?

Interlinear Text

Ὁ	ἀσπασμὸς	τῇ	ἐμῇ	χειρὶ	Παύλου
G3588	The salutation	G3588	with mine own	hand	of me Paul
	G783		G1699	G5495	G3972

Additional Cross-References

Colossians 4:18 (References Paul): The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen.

Galatians 6:11 (Parallel theme): Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.

2 Thessalonians 3:17 (References Paul): The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write.