

2 Thessalonians 3:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write.

Analysis

The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write—**The salutation of Paul with mine own hand** (ho aspasmos tē emē cheiri Paulou, ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ Παύλου)—Paul personally pens the closing greeting. Typically, he dictated to a scribe (Rom. 16:22) but added personal signature. **Which is the token in every epistle** (sēmeion en pasē epistolē, σημεῖον ἐν πάσῃ ἐπιστολῇ)—authenticating mark against forgery (cf. 2:2).

So I write (houtōs graphō, οὕτως γράφω)—Paul's distinctive handwriting (perhaps large letters, Gal. 6:11) verified genuineness. This protected against false letters claiming apostolic authority. Truth requires authentication; claims need verification. Apostolic succession required written, verifiable transmission.

Historical Context

Without modern authentication methods, personal handwriting signatures were primary verification. Paul's emphasis shows early forgery attempts. The church needed safeguards to distinguish apostolic teaching from counterfeits. This principle undergirds later canon formation—apostolic authorship authenticated Scripture.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How do you authenticate spiritual teaching to ensure it's genuinely from God?
2. What modern 'forged letters' (false teachings) claim divine or apostolic authority?
3. Why is verifiable, written revelation necessary rather than relying solely on oral tradition?

Interlinear Text

Ὁ	ἀσπασμὸς	τῇ	ἐμῇ	χειρὶ	Παύλου	ὃ	ἐστίν
G3588	The salutation	G3588	with mine own	hand	of Paul	which	is
	G783		G1699	G5495	G3972	G3739	G2076
σημεῖον	ἐν	πάσῃ	ἐπιστολῇ·	οὕτως	γράφω		
the token	in	every	epistle	so	I write		
G4592	G1722	G3956	G1992	G3779	G1125		

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 16:21 (References Paul): The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand.