

USE OF AMANUENSES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT (Overview)

Virgil Warren, PhD

I. Basic Data Regarding Amanuenses

Paul used amanuenses postscripts	Paragraphs explained as Pauline
A. Romans 16:22	16:25-27 after 15:33; 16:20 (21-23)
B. 1 Corinthians 16:21	16:21-23* after 16:19-20
C. 2 Corinthians	13:(13-)14 after 13:12 (-13)
D. Galatians (6:11-18?)	6:11-18?*
E. Ephesians	6:23-24?
F. Philippians	4:21-23
G. Colossians 4:18	4:18*
H. 1 Thessalonians	5:28
I. 2 Thessalonians 3:17	3:17-18* after 3:16
J. 1 Timothy	6:21b
K. 2 Timothy	4:19-22 after 4:18
L. Titus	3:15b after 3:15a
M. Philemon (19?)	25

*Places where Paul indicates that he is writing with his own hand (cp. Philemon 19)

II. Critical Implications of the Use of Amanuenses

A. May qualify the validity of style studies as bases for denial of traditional authorship. The scribe could have been responsible for a rewrite after dictation so that his style affects the final wording. He could have made an even greater contribution if the author had simply given a line of thought, an outline, or a statement of the gist of his concern; the scribe would then have been largely responsible for generating the verbal expression of the letter. The author would presumably read over and approve the piece before sending it. The effect of amanuensis on style should not be overly pressed, however, since Paul's various letters do not show highly divergent styles even though some were written by his own hand (Galatians and Philemon) while Tertius wrote Romans and perhaps still different writers penned other epistles of Paul.

B. Could explain digressions in Paul's letters because digressions more naturally occur in oral presentation (**structure**).

C. Raises an option for the collection of the Pauline corpus (canon). One of the scribe's responsibilities could have been duplicating the letter as a record of correspondence or as a back-up copy in case the original was destroyed or lost (cp. 2 Timothy 4:13).

D. May explain loosely attached paragraphs at the end of letters, where Paul picked up the pen to add his customary postscript (**structure**; see 2 Thessalonians 3:17-18).

E. Affects the total range of constructs possible within “God-breathedness.” The Spirit serves a protective and confirmatory role for what had significant human input in generating ideas and ways of expressing them (**manner of inspiration**).

F. Fosters a less rigid approach to **hermeneutics**. Fine nuances in terminology and phraseology are probably not at the right level to match the author’s intent and concern.