

# The Warmth of the Kingdom

44 - Living the Simple Gospel: Philippians  
Church on the Park | Sunday, 25 March 2018

**Text:** Phil. 4:21-23

**Theme:** You are an ambassador of the warmth of Christ and his Kingdom.

**Intro:** Today, we come to our last message in our series on Philippians. We will find that there is a wealth of wisdom in Paul's concluding words. We are tempted to quickly pass them by and think they are merely an afterthought. But instead, they show the heart of the Kingdom and its practice in everyday life.

## 1) God's Kingdom is full of warmth (Phil. 4:21).

- As believers in Jesus Christ we are all **ambassadors** of Christ. We are **Christ's representatives** on earth and we are called to reflect his heavenly Kingdom. This Kingdom is full of **warmth** and we see this in **Paul's final exhortation** and words. He exhorts the Philippians to "**Greet** every saint in Christ Jesus."
- "**Greet**." It's the word *aspazomai*. It means greet, be happy about, **welcome, embrace**, salute, express good wishes, greet with politeness and respect, and lastly to **affectionately say Good-bye**.<sup>1</sup>
- It was customary upon entering a house or meeting someone on the street or parting.
- It involves **embracing, kissing, offering the hand** or in some instances, prostrating yourself.
  - For us, it involves the first three, and it's important to note that the kissing does not mean romantic kissing. Sorry guys. It means a European style kissing upon **greeting or parting**.
- The **basic meaning** of this word means to **embrace in a respectful, kind and polite way**.
- The **Bible is full of these greetings** and they often convey a blessing that goes with it, like "**Peace** to you", "**God** bless you" or "Grace to you."
- Biblical **examples**: 1) As you **enter** (Matt. 10:12), 2) The Father of the **Prodigal Son** (Luke 15:20; cf. Gen. 45:14-15 and 46:29), 3) The **Good Samaritan** (Luke 10:25-37)
  - The classic example of greeting is found in the father of the prodigal son.
- My experience at **Abundant Life Christian Fellowship**. Also, my experience at **Pensacola**.
- Wisdom: Greet in a way that **blesses** the person you are greeting. The goal is to make them feel **happy, valued and appreciated**. Be **yourself**, but also try to forget yourself and **value the person** you are greeting. What we are called to do is **communicate** the **love** of the Father and Jesus Christ to one another.

## 2) You are an ambassador of Christ's love to every saint (Phil. 4:21).

- "**Every saint**"
- Notice **who** is to be greeted: every **saint**. *What's a saint?*
  - It's not talking about a statue or some great man or woman who has past away. Instead, it means a **holy one**. It's someone who has been **set apart** by God and made pure. It is all of you who have been **saved** and **sanctified** by Jesus Christ. You are no longer of this world, but of God's Kingdom. You are holy ones, saints.
- Take note on **what saints** are to be greeted: **Every** saint.
  - Don't **leave** one out. Everyone is **valuable**, from the **youngest to the oldest**, the **least** and the most **recognised**.
  - **Don't say**, "This person is too young, so I won't greet him." Don't say, "This person is too high for me, they are a pastor, so they don't need to be greeted." Don't think that someone does not need your love and appreciation. **Everyone** needs it. Neither think that I don't know this person, so I won't greet them. Remember **we are all ambassadors of the warmth** of Christ's Kingdom.
- **Practice** this with your **family**. First thing when you **get up**, Greet your family.

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<sup>1</sup> See End Notes for word study on *aspazomai*.

- Give them a **hug, a kiss, a pat, whatever is appropriate**. Make them know that you are **happy** to see them, even before you get a cup of coffee. Also, when you come home and go out, Greet one another. This is how **Love starts** in the home. Don't give the cold shoulder or get so **familiar** with one another that you no longer **warmly** and **affectionately** greet each other as you go in and out.
- In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus also tells us to greet those who don't know and sinners (Matt. 5:47, cf. 43-48).
- And yet, we are warned not to greet false teachers in 2 John 10-11. What does this mean?
  - It means not embracing them and approving of their teaching—not receiving them in an official way.
  - Here we see the depth of what greeting means—it does not just mean 'hi' and 'bye'.

### 3) True fellowship is only possible through the power of Jesus Christ (Phil. 4:21-23).

- “**In Christ Jesus.**” This has a **two-fold meaning**.
  - First, we are to greet those **who are in Christ Jesus**. They are our **fellow brothers**. They are **Christ's bride** and the **Father's pride and joy**.
  - But, it also means to greet one another **by the power of Jesus Christ**.
    - This is no task that you can do in your **own strength**. You need **God's grace** to fellowship in a way that is a witness to the Kingdom. You can not show love independent of Jesus. The warmth and love for one another is only by grace, by being plugged into the power socket of Jesus Christ.
- The example of **Mary & Elizabeth**: Luke 1:40.
- If we begin our meetings like this, we will not need to get in the Spirit during worship. We won't be fighting demons for the first twenty minutes before we breakthrough. Instead, we will empower one another right from the start.
- As a family, we pray in the car as we drive to church.
- This greeting is **a mutual thing**. It's a part of this ministry of **giving and receiving**. We need to learn to both give love and receive love.
  - Some of us are good at giving but not as receiving. Others of us are good at receiving but not at giving. Both of these are meant to be equally balanced in our lives. We need to both give and receive. The two go together like **two hands and two feet**, like **two eyes and two ears**.
- Paul & the Ephesians: Acts 20:37

### 4) When the Gospel is lived out it has power to penetrate the most fortified places (Phil. 4:23)

- Listen to this: “All the saints greet you, especially those of **Caesar's household**” (Phil. 4:22).
- *Did you hear that?* The Gospel **penetrated** into Caesar's household. Now there are saints in Caesar's palace and all around his region.
  - Most likely Paul wrote this in **61AD**. Therefore, this was **Nero's workforce, his civil servants**. Nero who was known for his **sinfulness**: killing his mother and blaming Christians on the fire in Rome.
- **The Gospel spreads when we live it out**. Again, it's not just about **sharing it**, it's about **living it**. Living it causes people to ask questions that open up the opportunity to share the Gospel.
- People want to see **the simple Gospel lived out**. That's **the greatest proof of the resurrection of Jesus—not** our **zeal or arguments**, but **love** working through us by **faith**.

**Conclusion:** We are all called to reflect the warmth of Christ's Kingdom. When we do this, people's lives will be healed and the Gospel will penetrate the hardest of places. The darker and colder it is, the more this fire and warmth will be recognised and received. The key to the Good News spreading is us simply living the simple Gospel.

## END NOTES

**782. ἀσπάζομαι *aspázomai***; fut. *aspásomai*, mid. deponent verb. To embrace, to salute, trans. spoken of those who meet or separate (OT references with the meaning of greeting: Judg. 19:20; Ruth 2:4; 1 Sam. 25:6; 2 Sam. 20:9; Dan. 10:19). Equivalent to the NT “Peace be unto you” of those who meet (Luke 24:36; John 20:19; also coll. Matt. 10:12; Luke 10:5). Also spoken of those who separate (Judg. 18:6; 2 Sam. 15:9); equivalent to the NT “Go in peace” (Mark 5:34).

(I) Of those who meet or are present, to salute, welcome, greet (Matt. 10:12; Mark 9:15; Luke 1:40; 10:4; Acts 21:19; Sept.: Ex. 18:7). Including the idea of to visit, pay one’s respects to (Acts 18:22; 21:7; 25:13). To salute with a kiss (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Pet. 5:14). Spoken of the salute given to a king, homage accompanied with prostration (Mark 15:18, 19).

(II) Of those who separate, take leave of, bid goodbye (Acts 20:1; 21:6).

(III) Of greetings sent by letter or other means (Rom. 16:3, 5–16, 21–23; 1 Cor. 16:19, 20; 2 Cor. 13:12; Phil. 4:21, 22; Col. 4:10, 12, 14, 15; 1 Thess. 5:26; 2 Tim. 4:19, 21; Titus 3:15; Phile. 1:23; Heb. 13:24; 1 Pet. 5:13; 2 John 1:13; 3 John 1:14).

(IV) By implication, to love, treat with affection (Matt. 5:47).

(V) Spoken of things, to welcome, embrace, receive gladly (Heb. 11:13 referring to the promises).

**Deriv.:** *aspermós* (783), greeting, salutation.

**Syn.:** *philéō* (5368), to love, be friendly, kiss, envelop with affection; *enagkalízomai* (1723), to take in one’s arms, embrace; *hupodéchomai* (5264), to admit into one’s group, receive, offer hospitality.

**Ant.:** *katakrínō* (2632), to condemn; *krínō* (2919), to judge; *elégchō* (1651), reprove; *apodokimázō* (593), to repudiate; *katadikázō* (2613), to condemn; *mémphomai* (3201), to blame, find fault; *diabállō* (1225), to accuse falsely; *kakologéō* (2551), to speak evil of; *katalaléō* (2635), to slander; *katēgoréō* (2723), to accuse; *epikrínō* (1948), to bring judgment upon.

Zodhiates, S. (2000). [\*The complete word study dictionary: New Testament\*](#) (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

## ἀσπάζομαι, † ἀσπάζομαι, ἀσπασμός

### A. ἀσπάζεσθαι and ἀσπασμός outside the NT.

ἀσπάζεσθαι (etymology uncertain) means to effect ἀσπασμός, i.e. mostly “to proffer the greeting” which is customary on entering a house or meeting someone on the street or parting. ἀσπασμός consists in such gestures as “embracing,” “kissing,”<sup>2</sup> “offering the hand,” and even sometimes *proskynesis*<sup>4</sup> (→ προσκυνεῖν). It also consists in words, especially a set form of greeting. There is a good example in Herm. v., 4, 2, 2: ἀσπάζεται με λέγουσα· Χαῖρε σύ, ἄνθρωπε, καὶ ἐγὼ αὐτὴν ἀντησπασάμην· Κυρία, χαῖρε (cf. 1, 1, al; 1, 2, 2 and Lk. 1:27, 29). A special, official form of ἀσπασμός is the “homage” paid to an overlord or superior. This can be accomplished a. by a visit: Jos. Ant., 1, 290; 6, 207. ἀσπάζεσθαι can thus mean “to pay someone a ceremonious call,” “to pay an official visit to a high dignitary,”; ἀσπασμός itself has here the force of an “official call,” e.g., P. Flor., 296, 57: ἡ ἐποφειλομένη ὑμῖν προσκύνησις καὶ ἀσπασμός μου (cf. Ac. 25:13: ἀσπασάμενοι τὸν Φῆστον). Homage can also be paid b. by acclamation, cf. Plut. Pomp.,

12 (I, 624e): αὐτοκράτορα τὸν Πομπήϊον ἡσπάσαντο, 13 (I, 625c): μεγάλη φωνῇ Μάγνον ἡσπάσατο (cf. Mk. 15:18 in the NT).

ἀσπασμός in a letter is a greeting from a distance, which is a substitute for greeting and embracing in personal encounter. It expresses sincere attachment in separation and thus serves to strengthen personal fellowship. The custom of epistolary greeting was only gradually adopted in the sphere of Greek and Roman culture. In letters of the pre-Christian period greetings are not too common and there are no long series of greetings.<sup>7</sup>

Ziemann gives as the oldest instances Cic. Fam., XVI, 4, 5 (50 b.c.): *Lepta tibi salutem dicit et omnes*, and P. Oxy., IV, 745: ἀσπάζου πάντας τοὺς παρ' ἡμῶν (25 b.c.). Roller, however, has found rather more examples both from the last four centuries b.c. and the first century a.d. (to 70 a.d.). Thus he mentions other greetings in Cicero, e.g., Att., II, 9: *Terentia tibi salutem*, καὶ Κικέρων ὁ μικρὸς ἀσπάζεται Τίτον Ἀθηναῖον. But only if the letters of Plato are genuine, esp. Ep. 13, do we really have examples of the custom in the 4th century b.c., and the letter in Witkowski Epist. priv. Graec. (1911), No. 37 (162 b.c.) is hardly relevant in relation to this custom.

Epistolary greetings are rather better attested in the oriental correspondence which has come down to us. Thus the religious wishing of salvation is already an established custom in the East at the time of the Amarna letters; cf. in the letter of Ribadda (Knudtson, No. 68): "Ribadda spoke to his lord: The lady of Gubla give power to the king my lord ..."; or in a letter found in Taanak:<sup>10</sup> "... May the lord of the gods protect thy life." Rather weaker is the phrase "many greetings" (כַּלֵּי אֲמִלָּה) in Ezr. 5:7, though this is also to be understood as a religious wish (LXX: Δαρείῳ τῷ βασιλεῖ εἰρήνην πᾶσα). More exactly this greeting corresponds to the salutations of the apostolic letters (χάρις καὶ εἰρήνη κτλ). Greetings are also found in the Aramaic pap. letters from Elephantine (5th cent. b.c.). A special instance is the letter of Hōseh to a woman Slwh, which consist almost entirely of greetings: "The gods ask concerning thy salvation (יִשְׁאַלְנוּ שְׁלִמְכִי ... and concerning the salvation (שְׁלִמְךָ) of my lord Menachem ..." This shows that the religious wishing of salvation in letters, of which the Gk. ἀσπάζομαι, ἀσπάζου, etc. is a secularised form, was customary in pre-Ptolemaic Judaism.

The basic meaning of the term seems to be "to embrace." It denotes the embrace of greeting as well as the erotic embrace of love, Plat. Symp., 209b: τὰ ... σώματα τὰ καλὰ ... ἀσπάζεται. That this meaning is echoed in epistolary greeting is shown in Ps.-Plato Ep., 13 (363d): καὶ τοὺς συσφαιριστὰς ἀσπάζου ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ, "embrace our fellow-players in my place." From this original concrete meaning the more general sense follows, a. with a personal object, "to be fond of someone," "to like someone," "to agree to something," "to pay one's respects to someone" (Plat. Ap., 29d.: ὅτι ἐγὼ ὑμᾶς, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, ἀσπάζομαι μὲν καὶ φιλῶ); b. with a material object, "to give oneself gladly to something," e.g., Ps.-Xenoph. Ep., 1, 2: σοφίαν ἀσπάζεσθαι; Just. Apol., I, 39, 5; 45, 5; Test. G. 3:3: καταλαλιὰν ἀσπάζεται, "to accept with pleasure a situation or event," Eur. Ion, 587: ἐγὼ δὲ τὴν μὲν συμφορὰν ἀσπάζομαι; Jos. Ant., 6, 82: Σαοῦλος δὲ τούτων μὲν ἡσπάζετο τὴν εὐνοίαν καὶ τὴν περὶ αὐτὸν προθυμίαν; 7, 187: τοὺς λόγους ἀσπασάμενος; "to welcome a given factor or a prospect." Hb. 11:13: μὴ κομισάμενοι τὰς ἐπαγγελίας, ἀλλὰ πόρρωθεν αὐτὰς ἰδόντες καὶ ἀσπασάμενοι (sc. the promised city of 11:10), is mostly interpreted along these lines, but there seems to be rather closer analogy to greeting from a distance, cf. Plat. Charm., 153b: καί με ὡς εἶδον εἰσιόντα ἐξ ἀπροσδοκῆτος εὐθύς πόρρωθεν ἡσπάζοντο ἄλλος ἄλλοθεν. ἀσπασμός has the corresponding meaning of "embrace," "love," e.g., Plat. Leg., XI, 919e: τῷ ἐκείνων μίσει τε καὶ ἀσπασμῷ; b. "greeting," "visit," P. Oxy., 471,67; P. Flor., 296, 57.

In the LXX proper ἀσπάζεσθαι occurs only once at Ex. 18:7 in transl. of מִלֵּשְׁלָלָהּ, "to ask concerning the welfare." The whole passage introduces fairly fully the customary greetings on a visit: ἐξηλθεν δὲ Μωυσῆς εἰς συνάντησιν τῷ γαμβρῷ, καὶ προσεκύνησεν αὐτῷ καὶ

ἐφίλησεν αὐτόν, καὶ ἡσπρσαντο ἀλλήλους. ἀσπασμός is not found at all in the LXX.

ἀσπάζεσθαι in this sense is more common in the Apocrypha: Tob. 5:10; 9:6 **N** 10:12 ;**N** of the parting greeting ἀπασπασάμενος, with the parting word βάδιζε εἰς εἰρήνην; 1 Macc. 7:29, 33; 11:6; 12:17; 3 Macc. 1:8 of solemn meeting and accompaniment, as in Jos. Vit., 325. In Ep. Ar. ἀσπάζεσθαι is used of the greeting of the king by ambassadors after their return (173), of the greeting of an embassy by the king (179), and of a friendly gesture of the king to his guests at table when they have given good answers to his questions (235). ἀσπασμός is the greeting at the beginning of an audience or session (246) and the attendance owed to the king at the commencement of the working day (304). In Philo ἀσπάζεσθαι occurs only once in Rer. Div. Her., 44: ἀγάπησον οὖν ἀρετὰς καὶ ἄσπασαι ψυχῇ σεαυτοῦ καὶ φίλησον ὄντως καὶ ἥκιστα βουλήσῃ τὸ φιλίας παράκομμα (caricature) ποιεῖν, καταφιλεῖν, cf. 40–43; the meaning is consciously spiritualised to signify spiritual embrace or reception, being connected with the winning of non-erotic love. ἀσπασμός is not found at all in Philo.

## B. In the NT.

### 1. Jesus' Rules of Greeting.

For the Jews greeting is an important ceremony. This may be seen from Jesus' accusation that the scribes love τοὺς ἀσπασμοὺς ἐν ταῖς ἀγοραῖς (Mk. 12:38; Mt. 23:6f.; Lk. 20:46; 11:43). Like the seat of honour in the synagogue or at a feast, greeting in the market-place is one of the distinctions to which rabbis raise claim by reason of the dignity of their office. A greeting is given on the street when **רַבִּי** is first addressed to the one who is to be honoured. In their desire for a greeting, the rabbis want to be greeted first and therefore publicly recognised as superiors (cf. Alexander and the high-priest in Jos. Ant., 11, 331, → 496, n. 4). Censuring the claim of the rabbis to ἀσπασμός, Jesus does not wish his disciples to be honoured by greetings but rather to greet others. It is known that this basic principle was taught and practised by many rabbis, especially Jochanan ben Zakkai.

To offer rabbis the ἀσπασμός coveted by them was the impulse of all pious Jews. Only once (Mk. 9:15) do we read that the multitude respectfully greeted Jesus: ἰδόντες αὐτόν ἐξεθαμβήθησαν, καὶ προστρέχοντες ἡσπάζοντο αὐτόν. But there is frequent mention of → προσκυνεῖν before Jesus, and this is a particularly respectful form of ἀσπασμός. The caricature of such greeting is the mocking of Jesus as the King of the Jews in Mk. 15:18 f.: καὶ ἤρξαντο ἀσπάζεσθαι αὐτόν· χαῖρε, βασιλεῦ τῶν Ἰουδαίων· ... καὶ τιθέντες τὰ γόνατα προσεκύνουν αὐτῷ (ἀσπάζεσθαι here means to "acclaim," → 496).

According to Mt. 5:47 the ἀσπάζεσθαι of brothers is also customary among the heathen; it is a natural sign of the fellowship created by kinship and friendship. Jesus desires that we should greet on the street those who are not our brothers, and even our enemies, and thus draw them into the circle of our fellowship, not recognising the enmity. In just the same way R. Jochanan ben Zakkai tried to be the first to extend greetings even to a Gob, (b. Ber., 17a).

How seriously Jesus took this matter of ἀσπάζεσθαι may be seen finally from the rule which He gave His envoys in Mt. 10:12 f.; Lk. 10:5 (for the ἀσπάσασθε αὐτήν of Mt. Lk. has the more concrete πρῶτον λέγετε· εἰρήνη τῷ οἴκῳ τούτῳ). The point at issue is that of greeting on entry into a strange house. The customary → εἰρήνη σοι is the word of greeting. This peace is presented quite realistically as a *dynamis*. If the family is worthy of it, i.e., if the messenger is received accordingly (Mt.), then the power of the greeting comes on it as the Spirit comes on man, or blood<sup>21</sup> or a curse to his destruction. Otherwise the

εἰρήνη of the disciples will return to them. This part of their power of εἰρήνη will not, then, remain in the house, but will come back to the disciples for other use. The εἰρήνη is thus a power with which the disciples can spread blessing but the withdrawal of which has the force of a curse. The power is linked with the word and corresponding gesture. The greeting of apostles who are endued with ἐξουσία (Mt. 10:1) == δύναιμις is thus a sacramental action.

In a certain contrast to this high estimation of the greeting is the prohibition in Lk. 10:4: μηδένα κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ἀσπάζεσθε (without par.), i.e., Do not allow yourselves to be held up on the way by time-wasting ceremonies, do not enter into conversations on the streets, but hasten to the place where you are to stay and work (anal. 2 K. 4:29). The disciples are thus forbidden to make contacts by greeting in the course of their actual journeys.

## 2. The ἀσπασμός in Religious Narrative.

According to Lk. 1:29 Mary wonders concerning the greeting of the angel: ποταπὸς εἴη ὁ ἀσπασμὸς οὗτος (ἀσπασμός is here a word of greeting). Each greeting has in fact its own ring. The Greek χαῖρε (→ 496), punningly deepened by κεχαριτωμένη, is related to the biblical ὁ κύριος μετὰ σοῦ of Ju. 6:12; Rt. 2:4. In the ἀσπασμός there is proclaimed already something of the wonderful message of grace which the future mother of Christ is at once to receive.

A second greeting of profoundest importance and remarkable power is that with which Mary greets Elisabeth in Lk. 1:40–44. We are not told how it runs, but the (φωνὴ τοῦ ἀσπασμοῦ of Mary stirs the child John in his mother's womb; it reveals to him the nearness of the mother of Christ. Through the greeting Elisabeth herself is filled with the "Holy Ghost." Thus here again there operates in the greeting a *dynamis* of divine character.

## 3. The Greeting of the Apostle.

In Ac. it is often emphasised that the apostle greets a congregation either on arrival (18:22; 21:7, 19) or at parting (20:1; 21:6). At Ac. 18:22 ἀναβὰς καὶ ἀσπασάμενος τὴν ἐκκλησίαν simply means that he visited the church. On the other hand, κατηντήσαμεν εἰς Πτολεμαῖδα καὶ ἀσπασάμενοι τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς ἐμείναμεν ἡμέραν μίαν παρ' αὐτοῖς at 21:7 lays a certain emphasis on the scene of the greeting, i.e., in the assembly, while at 21:19 the report is preceded by a solemn greeting of the elders assembled in the house of James. Similarly, the greeting is significant at parting. According to Ac. 20:1 the ἀσπασσάσθαι or parting greeting forms the conclusion of an exhortation to the assembled disciples. At 21:6, they knelt for prayer on the shore, and then parting from one another (ἀπησπασάμεθα ἀλλήλους) took place prior to going aboard the ship. This moving ceremony would consist of embracing, kissing and the wishing of peace.

The initial greeting of the apostle would again consist in a χαίρετε (Lk. 1:28; 2 Jn. 10 (→ χαίρειν) or an εἰρήνη ὑμῖν (→ εἰρήνη), as at the beginning of an address of greeting; though it may be that some of the greetings found at the beginning of the epistles (χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη κτλ.) were also used. The concluding greeting would be εἰρήνη ὑμῖν or ὑπάγετε εἰς εἰρήνην, as at the end of epistles (Gl. 6:16; Eph. 6:23; 1 Pt. 5:14; 3 Jn. 15).

## 4. The ἀσπασμός in Epistles.

In the NT the most common use of ἀσπάζεσθαι is as an epistolary formula (47 times against 13 others). It occurs in almost all the epistles; the only exceptions are Gl., where relations were temporarily very strained, Eph., 1 Tm. and the Catholic Epistles Jm., 2 Pt., Jd. and 1 Jn. If our conclusion is correct that the custom of greeting in letters was rare prior to 70 a.d., Paul seems to have been the first to see great significance in it. He welcomed it as an expression of the particular affection which he bore churches as a Christian and an apostle. It may be, however, that in the environment in which he grew up, and particularly his Jewish surroundings, the habit of epistolary greeting had been more fully adopted than we are now in a position to show (→ 497).

We distinguish an imperative and an indicative form. In the imperative a. ἀσπάσασθε is the most common term. The writer asks his readers, whether individuals or groups loved and esteemed by him, to present his greetings from a distance, as in the long series in R. 16:3 ff.; Col. 4:15: καὶ Νύμφαν καὶ τὴν κατ' οἶκον αὐτῆς ἐκκλησίαν; Hb. 13:24: πάντας τοὺς ἡγουμένους (only here is prominence given to the leaders as compared with the whole community, cf. Ign. Sm., 12, 2: ἀσπάζομαι τὸν ... ἐπίσκοπον καὶ ... πρεσβυτέριον καὶ τοὺς ... διακόνους); b. ἀσπάσασθε as a greeting to all the members of the community, Phil. 4:21: πάντα ἅγιον ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ; Col. 4:15: τοὺς ἐν Λαοδικίᾳ ἀδελφούς; 1 Th. 5:26: τοὺς ἀδελφούς πάντας; Hb. 13:24: καὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀλίους. This formula does not occur in Ign. The greeting is naturally restricted to words. That purely human relations and evaluations are not expressed in it is plain from the characterisation of those who receive it. Either achievements are emphasised, as in R. 16, or they are described as saints and brothers, as in Phil. 4:21; Col. 4:15; 1 Th. 5:26. The greeting expresses and strengthens the bond of fellowship with those who are engaged in the same task and who serve the same Lord, i.e., with saints and brothers (cf. 1 Jn. 1:3). A variant of b. is c. the demand to the whole congregation ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν ἀγίῳ φιλήματι, 1 C. 16:20; 2 C. 13:12; R. 16:16; 1 Pt. 5:14; cf. also 1 Th. 5:26: ἀσπάσασθε τοὺς ἀδελφούς πάντας ἐν φιλήματι ἀγίῳ. Here there is added to the greeting the gesture of → φίλημα, which is naturally linked with embracing, so that we may translate: "Embrace one another with the holy kiss" (→ 496, n. 2). It is to be assumed that the holy kiss was customary in the churches (Just. Apol., I, 65, 2). Hence the distinctive feature is that on the reading of the letter it should take place at the request of the absent apostle. The fellowship with one another and with him which is strengthened by obedient reading (cf. 1 Jn. 1:3) will then be sealed by the reciprocal ceremony. This ἀσπάζεσθαι, too, has within itself a holy *dynamis* and borders on a sacramental action. Finally, in letters to individuals d. we have the sing. ἄσπασαι, e.g., at 2 Tm. 4:19, which is just a friendly greeting; at Tt. 3:15: ἄσπασαι τοὺς φιλοῦντας ἡμᾶς ἐν πίστει, where the greeting is restricted to believing friends; and at 3 Jn. 15: ἄσπασαι τοὺς φίλους κατ' ὄνομα, which is a purely secular formula.

Indicative greetings are introduced either by ἀσπάζομαι, which is found only in Ign.<sup>33</sup> as and corresponds to Paul's ἀσπάσασθε, or by ἀσπάζεται and ἀσπάζονται. They occur a. when individual fellow-Christians, absent at the time of writing, deliver their greetings. These are either mentioned by name (1 C. 16:19; R. 16:21–23, where we have the rare instance of a greeting in the first person: ἀσπάζομαι ὑμᾶς ἐγώ, from the actual scribe; Col. 4:10, 12, 14; Phlm. 23 f.; 2 Tm. 4:21), or referred to generally (Phil. 4:21: οἱ σὺν ἐμοὶ ἀδελφοί; Tt. 3:15: οἱ μετ' ἐμοῦ πάντες; 1 C. 16:20: οἱ ἀδελφοὶ πάντες). Such greetings help to give the readers a concrete picture of the situation in which the epistle is written and to include the friends and assistants of the apostle in the fellowship which he enjoys with them. b. Individual groups in the congregation may send their greetings where there is some particular relationship (Phil. 4:22: μάλιστα δὲ οἱ ἐκ Καίσαρος οἰκίας; Hb. 13:24: οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας; 2 Jn. 13: τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἀδελφῆς σου (if these are nieces); 3 Jn. 15: οἱ φίλοι. Ign. Mg., 15: Ἐφέσιοι ἀπὸ Σμύρνης. Again c. the whole church where the apostle is staying when he writes may send greetings to the church to which he writes: of οἱ ἅγιοι πάντες, 2 C. 13:12; Phil. 4:22; 1 Pt. 5:13: ἡ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι συνεκλεκτή (if this is the church in Babylon); 2 Jn. 13 (if the sister is the church). It is here assumed that the church knows of the despatch of the epistle and has asked the apostle to send greetings. Furthermore d. there are ecumenical greetings, as in 1 C. 16:19: ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τῆς Ἀσίας, and even more comprehensively in R. 16:16: ... αἱ

ἐκκλησίαι πᾶσαι τοῦ Χριστοῦ. In the first case Paul speaks for the churches of the “province” of Asia, in the latter for all churches everywhere. He has no particular charge to do this, but is simply expressing the sure and certain fact that the churches are aware of their fellowship of faith with the church to which he writes. R. 16:16 is so strongly ecumenical or catholic that it may almost be asked whether it was not added in the later “catholic” redaction. Ign. Mg., 15 may be quoted in the same connection: καὶ αἱ λοιπαὶ δὲ ἐκκλησίαι ἐν τιμῇ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς.

Finally, we have a distinctive greeting ε. in the formula: ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ (Παύλου) in 2 Th. 3:17; 1 C. 16:21; Col. 4:18. According to 2 Th. 3:17 this is a σημεῖον of authenticity in every letter. It is a greeting in the apostle’s own hand which is part of the normal style of a letter and yet which is also a requirement of the apostle, being materially identical with an ἀσπάσασθε (sc. from me) or an ἀσπάζομαι. The phrase gives to his greeting a certain solemnity. He performs the ceremony with a full sense of its inner significance. A striking feature is that this ἀσπασμός, i.e., the formula introduced, does not in fact occur in every letter. Yet there can have been no rigidity about this, and we must also remember that many earlier and later letters of Paul which have perished probably contained it. Above all, he may well have added his own greeting or conclusion even in letters which do not have the formula; this would be recognisable only in the original MS (cf. Gl. 6:11 ff.; R. 16:17–20).

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Windisch, H. (1964–). [ἀσπάζομαι, ἀπασπάζομαι, ἀσπασμός](#). G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, & G. Friedrich (Eds.), *Theological dictionary of the New Testament* (electronic ed., Vol. 1, pp. 496–502). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.