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How Important Is Your PHYSICAL Life?

Perhaps YOU have unwittingly begun to "take thought" for your physical life! God's Church is to be given PROTECTION during the coming tribulation. But will EVERY PERSON in the Church be given physical protection?

by Garner Ted Armstrong

MANY IN God's true Church stand in *mortal danger*—NOW! With every passing day, the overawing, world-shaking events prophesied to happen are swiftly drawing nearer! As God's people have grown in His revealed truth of the Bible, we have come to see it is His will to PROTECT the Philadelphia Church during the perilous times of world wars and violence! (Rev. 3:10 and 12:14).

As most of you know, God's ministers believe the Bible most probably indicates the *place* of that protection will be PETRA, the "Rose-red city of rock," buried deep in the rugged mountains to the south-east of Palestine, in the rocky, desolate and practically inaccessible vastness of the ancient land of Edom.

Hundreds of you heard Mr. Armstrong describe Petra during the last Feast of Tabernacles—thrilled to the motion pictures of the actual PLACE which God evidently is preparing for His saints!

But a grave danger accompanies this

precious knowledge! A danger to which most of our people are ASLEEP!

Is Your Physical Life Important?

Almost without realizing it, many earnest and sincere brethren have begun to "take thought" for *their lives* (Matt. 6:25) and set their hearts on saving and preserving their physical bodies!

Stop to THINK!

What did you really DO when you were baptized?

If your baptism was REAL, and if you were an *unblemished* sacrifice (Rom. 12:1) holding back *nothing* from your Creator, then you GAVE your very life to HIM when you were plunged into the watery grave! "Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?" (Rom. 6:3). Just as Jesus Christ was *dead and buried* for three days and three nights—so we are figuratively DEAD once we have given our lives into God's hands, and our bodies regarded as *crucified* with Him! "Therefore we are buried with

Him by baptism into death . . . knowing this, that our old man is *crucified* with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. 6:4-6).

The Apostle Paul, who had vigorously persecuted God's true Church prior to his conversion, *realized fully* that his life was OWNED of God—literally POSSESSED of God! He said, in Galatians 2:20, "I am *crucified with Christ*, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me . . ." Paul regarded his body as hanging on the cross *with* Jesus. "I die daily," wrote Paul (I Cor. 15:31).

Christ Bought Us

How important is your physical life? VERY IMPORTANT—but not to YOU—to *Jesus Christ!* Remember, when you are baptized, you were *crucified* with Christ. The old *you*, with your former aspirations, desires, motives, vanity and lust—DIED! And now, instead of the *old self*, just slightly *different* in the things you believe, and with a few changed habits—you are to

be an entirely NEW self, a CHANGED, DIFFERENT PERSON! ". . . put off concerning the former conversation (conduct, ways) *the old man*, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that you put on the *new man*, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:22-24).

When Christ shed His life blood on the cross (Isa. 52:12; Lev. 17:11), He paid the penalty for your sins—IN FULL! Since Jesus was God in the flesh, His life was worth far more than the *sum total* of all other human beings. Therefore, Christ was able through His death and resurrection to BUY and PAY FOR ALL HUMANITY—IN FULL!

Whether you completely realize it or not—you do not belong to yourself! You are the property, the owned and completely unattached property, of Jesus Christ! "For you are BOUGHT with a price . . ." (I Cor. 6:20). "You are bought with a price, be not (become not) the servants of men" (I Cor. 7:23).

Therefore, your *very life*, your years, months, days, hours and minutes, BELONGS TO CHRIST! Your time is not your own—your very life is not your own to do with as YOU see fit! Have you ever completely realized that fact?

Count the Cost

Apparently, many brethren didn't really sit down and *count the cost* when they were baptized. Some didn't fully realize what they were doing! Did YOU visualize yourself, standing naked before a group of harsh-faced enemy soldiers in a field, with rifles and sub-machine guns pointed at YOU? Did YOU realize that YOUR children could well be carted away to a slave labour camp, or else horribly mutilated and brutally murdered before your very eyes? Did you stop to think that YOU may someday be mercilessly WHIPPED and BEATEN even in a CHURCH in this country? *Did you sit down and count the cost—realizing that all these things and even more horrible things could well happen to you in the future simply because you were giving your*

physical life to Jesus Christ?

Jesus plainly tells us unless we love Him MORE than we love our very mates, or our own children, MORE than we love our parents, relatives and close friends, MORE THAN EVEN OUR VERY OWN LIVES—we cannot be His disciples! (Luke 14:26).

WHY Were You Baptized?

Many of us need to survey ourselves—look into a spiritual mirror, and begin to ask ourselves, candidly, WHY were we baptized?

Did you ask one of God's servants to baptize you simply because many of the members of your family were baptized, and you felt looked down upon, or had that "left out" feeling? Did you stand in the water and go through the ordinance of baptism simply to "join" the group with whom you had been fellowshiping?

Or were you baptized because you could SEE the horrible things coming on this country, you BELIEVED the prophecies contained in your Bible, and the prophetic messages you'd heard Mr. Armstrong preaching, and you wanted a WAY OUT—a WAY OF ESCAPE? Were you?

If you were baptized for ANY of these reasons—YOUR BAPTISM WAS NOT A VALID BAPTISM, AND YOUR MOTIVES WERE NOT RIGHT!

Yes—startling though it may sound to many, NONE of these motives are the correct ones to qualify for baptism!

On the Day of Pentecost, after Peter's inspired sermon, the Jews were *frightened*—they were suddenly aware of the hideousness, the total *consequences* of what they had done! They said, "Men and brethren, *what shall we do?*" What was Peter's inspired answer? "REPENT, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ . . ."

WHY were they to repent?

". . . for the remission of sins! . . ." (Acts 2:38). *There was the purpose for their repentance—their surrender to God! That their SINS, their TRANSGRESSIONS against the perfect and holy laws of God could be blotted out through Christ's shed blood!*

"REPENT ye therefore, and be converted (CHANGED) that your sins

may be blotted out . . ." (Acts 3:19). Notice—that their SINS might be blotted out—not so their physical bodies could be saved from the first death!

If YOU were truly repentant, throwing yourself on God's limitless mercy, and really surrendering *your will* to Him at your repentance and baptism, then you were beseeching God to FORGIVE you for your PAST sins, to blot them out—to wipe the slate clean—to give you a "fresh start" in life! You were literally burying your life—crucifying the "body of sin" that you could begin to LIVE A NEW KIND OF LIFE! (Rom. 6:6).

What Has God Promised?

What has God actually *bound Himself to perform* in protecting the church? Perhaps many of us have not understood the scriptures properly, and have been led by an *assumption* into a dangerous state of mind! Most of you heard Mr. Armstrong's sermon at the Feast of Tabernacles about God's protection that is coming for His Church. Mr. Armstrong told of the *place* God is preparing, and of the many indications which have led us to believe it truly will be PETRA, the rose-red city of rock!

It is important to remember, however, that Mr. Armstrong did not say *every single individual* will be taken to a place of protection—nor does God's word say this! In the letter Christ addresses to the Philadelphia Church—THIS Church, He says "Because you have kept the word of my patience, I also will keep *you* from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. 3:10).

We find God promises to protect His people, His Church—the *Philadelphia* Church, before whom He has set an *open door*. See also Rev. 12:14-16, where the *woman* (here, as elsewhere, symbolical of a *church*) is taken to a place, described as being in the wilderness!

But notice!

Christ has promised to protect whoever is included in the word "you" contained in Revelation 3:10.

Could the "you" refer to *every individual* (Please continue on page 5)

WHY Local Churches?

Believe it or not, assembling together in local groups or churches may lead to loss of salvation to many—unless these pitfalls are avoided!

by Herbert W. Armstrong

TRUE, we are commanded not to forsake assembling ourselves together—and so much the more in these last days, as we approach the Day of the Eternal and the second coming of Christ.

But there are pitfalls. Those inexperienced and unlearned in all the instruction of God to His ministers would never see them. They would trap the unwary and the innocent. But they are there. And they are a very real and potential danger!

Nine New Churches Established

During 1956 *nine* new local congregations were established in these cities: Fresno, California; Longmont and Pueblo, Colorado; Garden City, Kansas; Minden, Louisiana; Dallas and Houston, Texas; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and London, England. Evangelistic campaigns to build up the local churches were held in both Fresno and Dallas. Another campaign is at this moment being conducted in London, England, with increasing attendance.

Every member of God's true Church will rejoice in this. But we have had to learn to "go slow with God," and to "wait on the Lord." It's human to want to jump off half-cocked, as the saying is—to get in a hurry—to get ahead of the Eternal.

When the PURPOSE of this assembling in a local group departs from God's purpose—when the *method* of conducting the local assembly departs from the Bible instructions and example, members often are driven *away* from God and into loss of eternal life!

You have heard me say often that most of the worldly churches have degenerated into social clubs. But of course most of us probably would never believe that could happen to any of *us!* We just don't think of ourselves in that language. Yet some of those oldest in our fellowship have actually fallen into that snare *without realizing it!*

For the safety and welfare of all, I

must speak plainly and candidly. God commands His true ministers: "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things *without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality*" (I Tim. 5:20-21).

An Unscriptural Attitude

Some, who have attended a local congregation of God's church for years, have gradually succumbed to the influence of Satan and the pull of the flesh, until they have come to look on the purpose and function of the local church something like this (and I summarize their unscriptural view as a warning to ALL!):

"We just want to have peace," they protest, justifying their departure from the BIBLE ways. "We just want to attend church every Sabbath, and enjoy the fellowship, without having any preacher lambast us, or tell us what's wrong with us, or use the Scriptures to hit at us. We want a pastor who will show LOVE toward us, by letting us do as we please, and as each of us sees it for himself. We don't want a pastor to use the Bible to strike out at us, and tell us we're wrong, and make us feel uncomfortable.

"And another thing," this attitude continues, "we want to have the 'say-so' in what we do, and how our services are conducted. We don't want any part in what our pastor calls 'God's work'—that's just *his* own personal work, and we're not interested, and we don't want to hear about it—we want no part in it. We don't care anything about going into all the world and proclaiming the Gospel. We don't care anything about whether people in Florida or Maine or Alabama are being brought into the truth and converted—they live too far away for us to enjoy fellowship with them, and so we have no interest in them, and don't want to be bothered or

made uncomfortable even hearing about them."

Rather astonishing, isn't it, that people who have heard God's TRUTH preached for many years—people who at first accepted it in the love of God, professed it, started out practising it—should, through the years, *fall away* from the truth, reject *new* truth as it is uncovered, begin to embrace false doctrines and errors, and finally come to such an attitude as above quoted?

It Has Happened Here!

But I assure you, my brethren, that such has happened! I do not here accuse any individual. I say to those concerned, look down deep into your own hearts! If the shoe fits, either put it on and wear it—INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE, TO BE BURNED!—or else REPENT before it is everlastingly TOO LATE! But to those who do *not* share this degenerated carnal attitude, I say, "I *don't* mean you!"

But that's not all. Hear some more of this attitude into which ANY ONE OF US might degenerate, unless we are AWAKE to the *danger!*

These people, if they express how they really feel, would continue to say:

"We just want to ENJOY this fellowship and Sabbath service each Sabbath. We want it to be a *change*—a rest from our weekly work and routines—a place where we can come for diversion and ENJOYMENT, and we want it to be uplifting and encouraging, so that we can go home feeling better pleased with ourselves. We don't want a pastor getting us all upset by showing us our sins—telling us that because we were divorced and remarried we are living in adultery—telling us we are robbing God if we don't pay tithes. Why, we don't think God would be fair if He split up families just because one member has a former living husband or wife—and we don't want any of OUR money to go into a work we don't consider is OUR work, and we don't want any of OUR money to go to the preacher, either. Just because it

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is taught from Pasadena that divorce and remarriage is adultery—just because Armstrong and his worshippers say it's a sin if we don't pay tithes—well, if we disagree with what is taught at Pasadena, that's our God-given right! We want the right to believe as we reason it out for ourselves. We want a preacher to show LOVE toward us by telling us how good we are, and sending us home better pleased with ourselves, feeling good, encouraged for the week ahead."

Perverted Love!

To these people, the minister who properly uses God's Word as God commands, to correct and reprove, is not showing love. The preacher who will twist the Word of God to lull them to sleep in their sins—actually condemning them to everlasting DEATH—is showing what they call love!

Some of them derive a certain satisfaction out of a disagreement with God's chosen servant. Instead of feeling guilty where the BIBLE condemns what they are doing or believing, it seemingly elevates their ego. If they can convince themselves that God's chosen servant is wrong, and they are right in various points of Scripture, then they feel superior. This helps them ride right over their sins. But they are riding straight into the jaws of ETERNAL DEATH!

We might think: "Why, that couldn't happen to any of OUR people who have

heard the TRUTH?" But I assure you, brethren, it has happened already, to a small few! Thank God!—only a few!

What is God's sentence upon them? Listen!

"It is IMPOSSIBLE for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, *and have tasted of the good Word of God . . .* if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh" (Heb. 6:4-6).

Let it be a warning to ALL, and let all FEAR, and TREMBLE before the all-powerful WORD OF GOD!

Purpose of Churches

Brethren, if we are to continue to grow—and to grow SPIRITUALLY as well as in numbers—we must remember that the PURPOSE of the Church is, first, to GO INTO ALL THE WORLD and preach Christ's GOSPEL. The FIRST commission to the Church is just that. Anyone who looks on that Great Commission of Christ as "Armstrong's private work" is just not a member of GOD'S Church. Anyone who does not have his whole heart in that work IS NOT A MEMBER OF GOD'S TRUE CHURCH, and has no right whatsoever to attend or fellowship in any of its local congregations. The very FIRST purpose, then, of each local congregation is the FIRST purpose of God's Church as a whole—to encourage, pray for, hear reports about, and help in—in whatever manner may be possible—the great work of God preaching and publishing the true GOSPEL to the world.

After that comes the SECOND commission Christ gave His Church—"FEED THE FLOCK." For this purpose, GOD has set some in His Church, first, apostles, then preachers, and then teachers, to be HIS instruments in feeding the local flocks each Sabbath.

No Elections or Politics

Yes, it is GOD who has set apostles, evangelists, pastors and teachers in His Church. The call must come from GOD. These men are merely HIS INSTRUMENTS. He trains them and prepares them. And WHY? To FEED the Church of God, as Paul told the elders at Ephesus (Acts 20). "For the PERFECTING

of the saints," writes Paul in Eph. 4:12-13; "for the WORK of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ, TILL we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the KNOWLEDGE of the Son of God, unto a *perfect man*, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

And HOW does God instruct His ministers to preach? Does He say, "Don't tell them their sins?" Does God say, as I know one man is represented to believe, "You are a sinner yourself, so you can't tell others their sins—instead, show love by ENCOURAGING them *in* their sins?" He does not! God commands, "CRY ALOUD, and SPARE NOT, and SHOW MY PEOPLE THEIR SINS."

God's instruction to ministers of local churches is this:

"I charge thee therefore before God . . . PREACH THE WORD; keep at it in season, out of season; REPROVE, REBUKE, EXHORT with all patience and doctrine" (II Tim. 4:1-2). He said the time would come when some in congregations ministered by GOD'S TRUE MINISTERS will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts heap to *themselves* teachers—turning away their ears from the TRUTH."

Brethren, do you realize what that means? In God's true Church GOD has set HIS ministers in charge. He has given them AUTHORITY. He has authorized them to bind and to loose. He has told them to RULE—to preach the WORD which, like a sharp two-edged sword cuts both ways—is profitable for correction, reproof, instruction. But this shows the people would try to SELECT THEIR OWN pastor—"heap to *themselves* teachers." Not the teachers God set over them—those of THEIR choosing, who will show their kind of perverted "love" by turning them away from the TRUTH, pleasing them with what they *want* to hear!

God's true ministers *will never do that!*

Should the brethren HATE God's minister when he properly uses God's Word, and declares it boldly? If he does this, God will CHASTEN many in the congregation thru him.

True, God says, "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous."

What Is Love?

But what is GOD's kind of LOVE in this regard? "For whom the Lord LOVETH He *chasteneth*" (Heb. 12:6). "My son, despise NOT thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him," says God (verse 5). "If ye are without chastisement . . . then are ye bastards, and not sons" (verse 8).

What about those few disgruntled, unhappy and rebellious ones who twist the truth into believing a preacher shows LOVE by condoning them in their sins? "For *this* is the LOVE of GOD, that we keep His commandments" (I John 5:3). And we break one of God's commandments when we live in adultery. And when we STEAL from God by embezzling HIS TITHE, we break another! There are TEN Commandments—not just one about the Sabbath!

God has given instruction in HIS WORD as to how His ministers whom He has set in authority shall deal with those who have thus departed from HIS LOVE, and who stir up dissension among brethren.

Authority to Act!

We learn by experience. In past years your Pastor tried to show love by not acting drastically or harshly with such people. God has punished him, and brought him to see how such people MUST be dealt with, for a little leaven will leaven the whole lump. And hereafter God's ministers will demonstrate IN POWER, if necessary, the authority God has given, and carry out His instructions, that the love and the spiritual growth of THE MANY shall not be perverted and destroyed by FEW!

If, in any local church, one member, or a few, offend and endanger the spiritual health of the whole body, Jesus' teaching is to "CUT IT OUT," for it's better to enter into the Kingdom with one arm, or one foot, than to perish in gehenna fire!

In this way, it shall be possible in the future for ALL the membership to be FILLED with the true LOVE and the JOY of God the Father—and, rejoicing together, we may PRESS FORWARD toward the mark for the prize of the HIGH CALLING of God in Christ Jesus!

How Important is PHYSICAL Life?

(Continued from page 2)

vidual within the Church? Let Christ answer this question. We may read, in Jesus' prophecy of the climactic world-shaking events to precede His second coming, of *other* specific statements regarding the future state of God's true Church! "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom," and these wars, together with the disease epidemics and famines will be but ". . . the *beginning* of sorrows. THEN shall they deliver YOU up to be *afflicted*, and shall kill YOU, and YOU shall be hated of all nations for my names' sake" (Matt. 24:7-9).

Did those to whom Christ spoke here constitute the *entirety* of the church? Was Christ referring to *every individual* in the Church?

NO! Of course not. If He had been including all the Church, then the Church, which is Christ's body, would cease to exist—*every individual* in it being killed!

Putting ALL the scriptures together as to the future of the Philadelphia Church, God tells us the Church *in general*—that is, MOST of the Church—will undoubtedly be taken to a place of safety. But others within God's true Church will be selected to *suffer* for Christ's sake! Christ was speaking, specifically, to His disciples in the prophecy He gave on the Mount of Olives. In the broader sense, however, He referred to "you" who are Christians, "you" who will obey and serve Jesus Christ—regardless of who "you" are! Since the disciples were the nucleus around which Christ was going to form His Church, He spoke more particularly to *them* in this case—or to His ministers!

Therefore it becomes clear that the larger part of those faithful, watching, *praying*, OVERCOMING brethren in the Philadelphia Church WILL be sheltered from the "hour of temptation (trial) which shall come upon all the world." And it also becomes clear that *certain individuals* within the Church, whom GOD will choose and select, will have to suffer physical tortures, and ultimate physical DEATH for the sake

of Christ and the gospel!

God has seen fit to bless His work on this earth with myriad and almost breathtaking gifts! He has granted His Church favor in the sight of the United States government agencies, and before state officials. He has poured out upon us every spiritual and physical blessing we could ask for—and *more!*

Certainly all of us whose hearts are firmly in the great work being done of God through His human instruments thrilled at the acquisition of the new properties God granted, and the new students He sent to His own college!

And yet—

This time of peace and safety for God's Church will have to end suddenly in the not too distant future!

Great Persecutions Ahead!

As God's work grows—so does its renown, and its notoriety! The larger we become, the more the huge religious organizations and denominations of *this world* will take notice of us. When they begin to really notice our work—PERSECUTION will begin—on a scale such as none of us has known before!

The very *growth*, then, which God is graciously granting His own work, will ultimately bring a great amount of ridicule, and of open persecution from the world!

Did Christ foretell any such thing? YES, He certainly did!

"If the world *hateth* you, you know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were *of* the world, the world would love its own, and because you are NOT OF the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you!" (John 15:18-19).

But is it just a matter of empty hatred on the part of our former acquaintances—our friends and relatives? Or will there actually be any real *suffering* connected with it?

"Remember the word that I said to you: 'A bondman is NOT greater than his Lord.' *If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you!*" (John 15:20). Jesus Christ, the living HEAD of this very Church, promises us PERSECUTION! Actually, many of you brethren living in scattered areas, and even in many of

the cities where a local congregation is blessed with a minister *are presently suffering* a certain amount of persecution! You should *be glad*, and REJOICE! For *great* is your reward in heaven! (Matt. 5:11-12).

Since Jesus Christ *suffered* while in the flesh, and *learned* by those sufferings (Heb. 5:8), so He intends that *we* learn lessons of patience and faith by the same means. "For *this* is thank-worthy, if a man for conscience sake toward God *endure* grief, suffering *wrongfully* [not even deserving the suffering he receives]. For what glory is it, if, when you be buffeted for your *faults* you take it patiently? But if, when you do WELL, and suffer for it, you take it patiently, *this* is acceptable with God" (I Peter 2:19-20). Here, Peter shows that even those who are living *perfectly* should learn to EXPECT sufferings and persecutions—since that is the very *reason* we're called! Notice! "For even hereunto were you *called*, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps" (I Peter 2:21).

Some Must Die

Jesus' commands to His disciples concerning the preaching of the Kingdom of God pertained not only to those original twelve, but to Christ's ministers throughout the ages of His Church. However, *it meant even more specifically* those ministers who would be alive *just prior to His return* to this earth!

"Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves, be you therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But *beware of men*, for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; and you shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles!" (Matt. 10:16-18). God's ministers, being sent from city to city on evangelistic campaigns in future years, can fully expect this prophecy of Jesus Christ to be fulfilled! Some of us may well be lashed, and beaten in the *very churches* which claim to be "Christian" in this nation of ours!

"And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child; and the children shall rise up

against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And you shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth *to the end* shall be saved" (vs. 21-22). Was Christ speaking *only* of that great persecution immediately ahead of the Apostolic Church? Notice—"But when they persecute you in this city, *flee* you into another, for truly I say unto you, *you shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come!*" (vs. 23). Jesus was speaking of that time immediately preceding His very second coming—OUR lifetime—NOW!

Remember—when you were baptized, you said to God you were *giving* your life to Him! Your *physical* life is *already* considered as DEAD—DEAD AND BURIED. Did you realize that fact? Paul said, "I am *crucified* with Christ" (Gal. 2:20), and, "I die daily" (I Cor. 15:31).

Some Have Wrong Goal

Surely you must remember how often Mr. Armstrong has spoken of having the right GOAL as the primary rule for achieving success! He has told all of us that having the correct GOAL in our Christian lives is perhaps the *most important* ingredient of all! Some, however, not fully realizing it, have allowed themselves to "get their eye *off* the ball" and to put their eye on the WRONG GOAL!

Christ *did* tell you, over and over again, NOT to seek to save your *physical* life—but to seek to save your SPIRITUAL life! To seek SALVATION FOR ALL ETERNITY!

"And I say unto you, my friends, Be *not* afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will FOREWARN you *whom* you shall fear: *Fear Him*, which after He hath killed hath power to cast into gehenna fire. Yea, I say unto you, fear Him!" (Luke 12:4-5). See also Isaiah 66:1-2.

NOTICE!

The Sacred Calendar for 1957 has been mailed to every member. If you have not already received your copy write us immediately, as your copy may have been lost.

We are told NOT to fear the *physical* harm that MAN can do to us—but to be concerned with what *God* will do to us if we disobey Him (Matt. 10:28).

Yes—surprising tho it may seem—many of God's own people have begun to "take thought" for their PHYSICAL comfort, their PHYSICAL well-being and safety in the perilous times ahead! They have begun to put the "cart before the horse" without *realizing* it!

The purpose of this article is to REVEAL this error to you—to ask YOU to search deep into *your own* heart, and SEE if perhaps *you* had begun to do the same things! Have you? God knows!

REMEMBER, brethren, "He that finds his life *shall lose it*, and he that LOSES his life *for my sake* shall find it!" (Matt. 10:39). *Never forget* the example of our forefathers, the ancient Israelites, when they were tried of God in the wilderness! These very lessons are written for YOUR admonition and MINE, in this last time (I Cor. 10:11). When they arrived at the Red Sea, they *complained*. When they came to Marah, where the water was bitter, they *grumbled*. When they got hungry, they griped, they complained, they *mur-mured* about their PHYSICAL WELFARE!

WHAT ABOUT US?

The real GOAL which you should be seeking is the Kingdom of God! Your GOAL is to be CHANGED—TRANSFORMED INTO A VERY SON OF GOD—A COMPLETELY, ENTIRELY DIFFERENT SPIRIT BEING! Petra is not an end in itself—it is, rather, merely a means to an end. The *end* is SALVATION! Salvation is SPIRITUAL, not physical protection for a time in some caves!

Let's seek FIRST the *Spiritual* things—let's be SO CLOSE to God, that REGARDLESS of what HE determines is to be our own individual duty in the coming tribulation—we will accept with JOY the calling He gives us, whether He says, "Go to Petra with the saints," or whether He says, "You shall be KILLED for my name's sake!"

Then you KNOW you are safe—then you HAVE ASSURANCE and need be in no doubt as to the outcome! Be *willing to die* for Christ—and then accept with gratitude and JOY the deliverance from torture should He see fit to grant it to YOU!

Should You ASSEMBLE Without a Minister?

We know you brethren long for local church fellowship. We know you need it. BUT, should you assemble by yourselves without a minister whom God has sent to feed the local flock?

by Herman L. Hoeb

RECENTLY we were again brought face to face with this serious problem.

In California, Arkansas, Florida, and even as far away as Hawaii groups want to assemble each sabbath. The desire usually commences after learning of nearby brethren and visiting with them, or after meeting them at the festivals.

With *social* fellowship comes the inevitable desire to assemble on the sabbaths for round-table discussions.

Many feel the necessity of *social* contact with brethren. They equally desire to learn more about the Bible. What could be better than meeting each sabbath for Bible study, it is reasoned! And think of the *social* fellowship!

Immediately some will think of Hebrews 10:25. "We should assemble ourselves together," they will say.

But what happens?

Wherever groups gather together a dominant individual inevitably arises. By force of personality others begin to look to him—even though he may *not* understand the Bible as well as they. He becomes a leader. Yet he may *not* be capable of keeping order. He is usually the center of arguments, doubts and divisions. Dissension and errors gradually arise. Some brethren leave in disgust—sour on the truth.

Is this *God's way* of feeding the flock?

New Testament Example

There are two methods by which we can LEARN the solution to this problem: 1) by New Testament *example*, 2) by Jesus' *instruction*.

First, let us understand the example of the Bible itself. We are experiencing today the same problem which confronted the early inspired, Spirit-filled

Church of God. The apostolic Church was a *scattered* Church (Acts 11:19). So are you brethren today! But what did that early scattered Church do?

Open your Bible to Acts 11. Notice that some "which were scattered abroad" (verse 19) "came to Antioch . . . and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem." What did they do? Notice it! "*They sent forth Barnabas*, that he should go as far as Antioch" (verses 20-22).

Barnabas was a trained teacher (Acts 13:1). Barnabas also sought out Paul (verses 25-26), who had already been trained personally by Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:17-18). They were eminently qualified to feed the flock.

Jesus Christ directed His apostles at Jerusalem to send pastors lest the Antioch brethren would assemble without leadership. The SAME example occurs in Acts 14.

The apostles, Barnabas and Paul, fled the city of Iconium because of persecution (verses 1-5). They came to Lystra where the Jews soon attacked them as they were conducting their evangelistic work. Thereupon they fled to Derbe (verse 20). In each of these cities the apostles were prevented momentarily from continuing their ministry. They soon returned, however, to confirm the disciples in the faith (verse 21). Now observe verse 23: "And when they had ordained them *elders* in EVERY church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord."

Paul did *not* establish churches without pastors! EVERY local church had its pastor. Jesus called His people sheep. They need a shepherd. Paul therefore

gave them pastors, or shepherds, who would feed the flock. We are NO different today. God's people still need pastors to lead them into truth.

And notice, too, that they were *ordained*, with prayer and fasting, *by the apostles*. God did not leave it to the brethren to gather together and to follow anyone who had a desire to become an elder. In these cities, where hundreds were being converted, Paul established local churches and ordained elders for EVERY church! But before ordaining elders Paul's practice was to teach them personally, both in public and in their homes. He said so in Acts 20:17, 20.

This is God's pattern—God's WAY.

Joined to Christ

If we are to enter the Kingdom of God, *we* must come under the government of God. We must learn to conduct ourselves God's WAY. Christianity is a WAY of life.

To many people, a local congregation becomes a place of *social* rather than *spiritual* fellowship. People join themselves together, instead of *being joined to Christ*. In John 15:5, Jesus said: "I am the vine, ye are the branches." What would you think if the branches would say to themselves, let us bundle ourselves together? Yet that is exactly what you are doing when you meet *of your own accord without ministers!*

To be a Christian you need to "abide" in Christ—you need to *live* by His instruction. Do the branches of a grapevine receive their sap from each other? Or do they receive it from the central stump? You need to receive your spiritual power from Christ—the vine. Not from a branch—an individual who thinks he would like to hold a study

group on the sabbath day.

Your *spiritual* fellowship is not merely with one another, but "with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" through the Holy Spirit (I John 1:3). Notice what John writes in verse 6: "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and *walk in darkness*, we lie, and *do not the truth*." If you claim to have real fellowship with God, and "walk in darkness"—disobey the instruction of the Bible—you are not doing the truth. You are actually cut off from real fellowship with the Heavenly Father.

"But if we walk in the light"—if we obey the Biblical instruction—"we have fellowship with one another" (verse 7). How plain! In order to have real fellowship with one another, you need to *abide* in the teachings of Jesus and His apostles—you need to follow the example and the instruction of the Bible, which is ABSOLUTE and FINAL AUTHORITY!

New Testament Instruction

Now let us turn once again to Hebrews 10:24-25. What is the *purpose* of assembling in local churches? "To provoke unto love and to good works . . . exhorting one another."

Notice carefully that Paul explains *the purpose* of our assembling, but *he does not explain* HOW the local assembly should be conducted. To understand *this*, we must turn to other verses which explain this phase fully.

In Eph. 4:11-17 Paul explains that Christ gave evangelists, pastors and teachers and other ministerial offices "for the perfecting of the saints . . . for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man . . . that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness . . . but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things."

What is the purpose of the ministry?

To instruct the brethren to grow in love and in good deeds—exactly as Heb. 10:24 mentions. Then God intends *the pastors* to set the right example and to instruct the flock which should assemble *with* a minister. IF BRETHREN COULD ACCOMPLISH THIS BY ASSEMBLING

WITHOUT A MINISTER, THEN JESUS WASTED HIS TIME TO TRAIN INDIVIDUALS TO BECOME PASTORS OR ELDERS. Then He was mistaken in training the disciples to preach and to feed the flock, if the flock could feed itself!

The very fact that the ministry is FOR the edifying of the Church is PROOF POSITIVE that assembling without a shepherd will NOT lead to *unity* and perfection in knowledge. Without a pastor, disunity, contention and error will inevitably arise in a local group. *Experience proves it!*

Where Two or Three Gather Together

But didn't Jesus promise that whenever two or three brethren gather together, He will be in their midst?

The common misapplication of this text comes from careless reading. Christ was discussing with His apostles the matter of making binding decisions in the Church (Mat. 18:17). He promises to back every decision—even where only two or three are gathered together IN HIS NAME!

What does "in His name" mean?

It means "by His authority"! We baptize "in the name of Jesus Christ"—"by His authority." But Jesus never gave authority for His converts to hold meetings by themselves without a pastor! Any who do so are not acting according to Jesus' commands. They are going contrary to Christ's authority. He does not promise to be in their midst. Besides,

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The Days of Unleavened Bread will soon be here! Many of you may be wondering what to serve your family during this festival. To solve your problem we have prepared several surprising recipes using unleavened bread.

Our older members already have these recipes, but if you do not have them write us immediately requesting them.

The recipes include *Cocoanut Crisps, Plain Wafers, Cheese Crackers, Whole Wheat or Graham Gems, Cornmeal Gems, Ice Box Crescent Cookies, Macaroon Crunchies.*

Included will also be information on the purchase of commercial unleavened bread.

according to the pattern laid down in Lev. 23:2-4, *God orders His ministers* to convoke assemblies—to order meetings. God tells us upon which days we must meet, and He orders His ministers to tell the people when and where He wants the assemblies held. It is God's doing, not man's. Ministers are God's bond-servants and the shepherds of the flock.

Now we can also understand clearly other New Testament passages. In writing to Philemon, Paul spoke of "the church in thy house" (Philemon 2). This is not speaking of brethren gathering for discussion groups or Bible studies. It is speaking of a *church*—an organized body of saints—over whom Philemon presided. Notice that Paul addressed him as "fellow-laborer" (verse 1). In verse 24 Paul lists "Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my *fellow-laborers*." These men were elders and evangelists laboring with Paul in the ministry. Philemon was also a "fellow-laborer"—a minister. Paul even calls him "a partner" (verse 17). The church in his house was NOT without a pastor.

Another important consideration many brethren still overlook is that the local church is for the instruction of those who are converted. *It is not the place to convert outsiders!* Yet it seems that some, not understanding this important principle, want to hold sabbath study groups to convert outsiders. And sometimes the unconverted are the very ones who dominate the meeting!

Mr. Armstrong has learned by experience that every group needs competent spiritual leadership. It cannot be left to zealous, but unwise, desire to have Christian fellowship. True fellowship comes by *obedience to God's WAY*. Even though most of you are scattered and have no regular sabbath service, yet be thankful that you are again being fed through two magazines, The PLAIN TRUTH and The GOOD NEWS. You can hear the daily broadcasts—you actually hear Mr. Armstrong on the radio in your own homes! When the World Tomorrow Broadcast is on the air, you are attending, in a sense, a church service *with a minister*. This is how God is feeding His flock! And we hope that soon a minister may be sent to spend his entire time visiting scattered members to answer their personal questions.