

# RELIGION 10A

## Death, Hell And The Grave Reading The Obituaries Doesn't Have To Be Dreadful

By Rev. Danny Mitchell  
SPECIAL TO THE POST

I guess during the course of life we all at some point think about life's most common denominator, that mystery we call death. I think during life's course we pick up the newspaper and read the current events in the local, state and world communities. We read of progress in urban communities. We read of tragedies in family affairs, humor in social relations, and victories in athletic competition. We scan the pages for the things that interest us the most. There too are those who like to read the Classified Ads, to get the best deals or opportunities in the listings.

But, there is a section that some people dread to get through before they get to the

classified ads. There is always that section, that if they had their way about it, would never be in the paper.

There is always that section that reminds some folk of the event that every man must face, that something we call *Death*. I don't know what it is, about the obituaries, but I have heard folk say the older you get the more realistic they become.

There seems to be some type of psychological or strange interest that comes over one when he or she reads the "Death Report." Questions arise, How old was he? What did they die from? How and where did they die? We get sure enough afraid when we see a lot of deaths very close to our age. What is it about death that never comes up in our daily conversations of people?

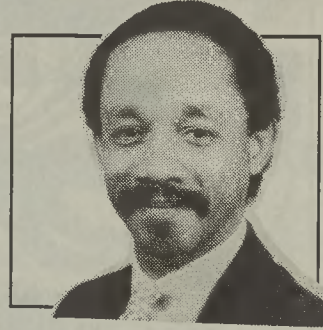
I hear some folk say that they love Jesus, and long for the day to live with Him eternally. But, they dread to take that step from mortality to immortality. Why this fear? Some believe that Jesus feared death when he said, "Father if it be thine will, remove this cup from me". It was not death that Jesus feared, it was the suffering, the pain that came before the death.

There are some of you today who have the fear of suffering and pain, but not death. When we have had a loved one who may have lived the last days of his or her life in agony, you may have said to yourself I sure don't want to leave that way. There may have been a close associate of yours who may have loved people, and in his service to humanity he was gunned

down by the hands of some murderer. That, too may have left an everlasting impression on your mind about dying. Most of us have the fear of pain and suffering but what will happen beyond death is what you should fear.

Those folk who cheated, lied, stole, used, neglected, and help dig ditches for folk on earth, don't want to see death. They are scared of what will happen after leaving. Conscience makes men afraid to go to the dust.

Death is not something to be feared, but something to look forward to. Ecc 3:7 says, "The day of death is better than the day of birth." Walt Whitman says, "nothing can happen more beautiful than death." How is this so? How many times have we ridden through the countryside in



Death is a necessary part of the cycle of life that is very important in nature. If everything lived and nothing died the earth could not sustain life. It would be too crowded, too chaotic, too disease infested. Someone died that you may have a chance to live your life and leave your footprints in the sands of time. Jesus died that you might have eternal life.

Jesus stepped through the valley of the shadow of death. Yet he also said that in three days I will rise. What does this mean? The grave is not the end. There is an extension, just beyond Jordan. An extension that Jesus called Paradise. It is but a step from a world of corruptibility to a world of immortality. It is everlasting life. If death should come I don't want to.

the early fall to notice the beauty of the trees in it's red, orange, brown, yellow and greenish leaves. Yet they are dead. Dead but beautiful. A seed doesn't look like much, yet plant on in the ground and it will rot and decay, and produce one of the tallest trees one could imagine. There is power and beauty in death. The reward is Resurrection.

## Eye On Gospel Loss Of Davis Brings Void To Gospel Music Industry



Rev. Ernest Davis

By Margaret Mansfield  
SPECIAL TO THE POST

The gospel world is mourning the recent death of Rev. Ernest Davis. Davis won gospel fame over the last several years at the helm of the Wilmington Chester Mass Choir, as well as for his work with the Gospel Music Work-

shop of America. He was just 39 years of age, but last month Rev. Ernest Davis succumbed to an illness which for the last year and a half, had him in and out of the hospital. Specifics of his death were not available but his gospel accomplishments are well-known. He's been director of the Wilmington

Chester Mass Choir since he founded it back in 1978, while still in college at Delaware State University. After recording a handful of albums, his last effort entitled "He's Preparing Me" paid off, winding its way up the gospel music charts. Reported his last wish was that the choir go on. Choir members say Davis will be sorely missed.

**Gospel Honors Its Best:** Nominations for the upcoming Seventh Annual Stellar Awards are an indication, that the gospel industry's farewell to Rev. Ernest Davis will be a fond one. Davis tied with Tramaine Hawkins for the most Stellar nominations with a total of four, including album of the year (traditional), and best music video. Coming as no surprise to anyone were the four nominations Tramaine Hawkins racked up, including best

solo performance by a female (traditional) and song of the year. The annual ceremonies, singing out the best in gospel, is set to take place next month in Los Angeles. Noticeably absent from the recently released list of nominations were the Winans, whose latest album has been their best-selling. However, Bebe & Cece are among those artists receiving multiple nominations. Others include Daryl Coley, John P. Kee, Rance Allen, James Moore, Yolanda Harris, and the Sounds of Blackness. The ceremonies are being taped for broadcast sometime in January. Up for song of the year are John P. Kee ("Jesus Is Real"), Rev. James Moore ("Joy"), Tramaine Hawkins

("The Potter's House"), and Rev. Ernest Davis & the Wilmington Chester Mass Choir ("He's Preparing Me"). Nominees for album of the year (traditional) are Tramaine Hawkins ("Live"), James ("Live With the Mississippi Mass Choir"), John P. Kee ("Wash Me"), and Rev. Ernest Davis & the Wilmington Chester Mass Choir featuring Daryl Coley ("He's Preparing Me"). Contemporary nominees: Ricky's Dillard's New Generation Choral, Daryl Coley, Rance Allen and Yolanda Adams.

**Just Briefly:** Guess who's back--none other than the Clara Ward Singers. The group reorganized this year and signed to True Believers Records has just released a

whole new album of all old material. The album will be distributed on Capitol Records.

**This week's scripture: "Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off,"--Romans 11:22.**

### Sunday School Lesson A Commentary

**Introduction:**

The first Christians were Jews, and for some time they invited only Jews to accept Christ. When all were convinced that Gentiles might become Christians, some still insisted that they could not be saved unless they became Jews as well. The Holy Spirit and the church together decided that salvation was through Christ, and Gentiles had no need to take up Jewish customs. One well-known custom was to take a vow of consecration. A Jew might do this in gratitude for his blessings, or just as a means of drawing closer to God.

At the end of the period of consecration there were specified sacrifices to be made (Numbers 6).

**Lesson Background:**

Paul's action would be simply to help the men who had made the vow and to show that Paul himself was still a loyal Jew. Apparently there was some act or ceremony of purification for Paul and the four men who were nearing the end of the time of their vow. They went to the priests in the temple to arrange a schedule for all the offerings and ceremonies that would mark the completion of their time of special consecration.

And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him. Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the

people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.

For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus and Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple. And all the city was moved, and the people ran together; and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut. And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left.

Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was and what he had done. And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek? Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers? But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city (Acts 2: 26-30).

Apparently the ceremonies and sacrifices were to take seven days. Near the end of that time there was an interruption. Asian was the province where Ephesus was lo-

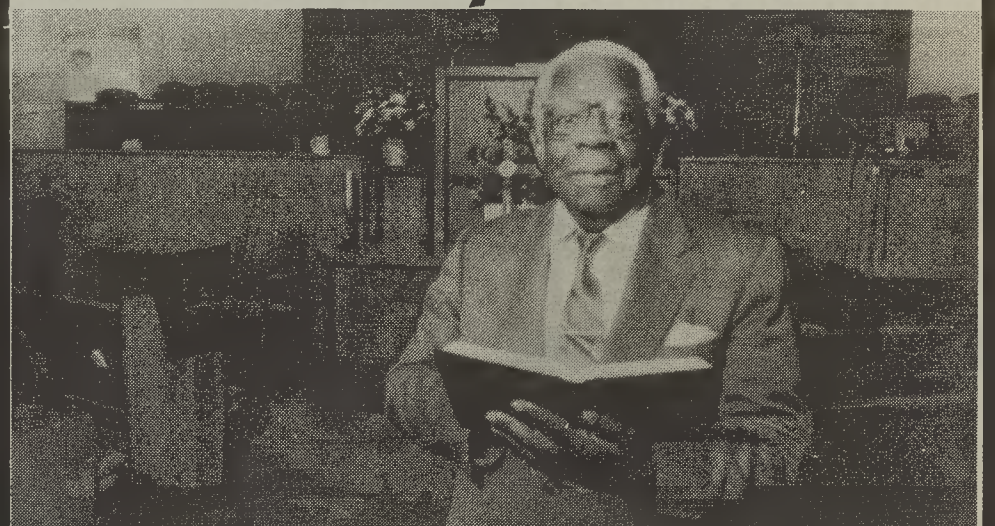
cated, and probably some or all of these Jews of Asia were from that city. They knew about Paul's three-year ministry there. The people meant the Jewish people; the law meant the Jewish law; this place meant the Jewish temple. As noted earlier, Paul did nothing to deep Jews from honoring the people, the law, or the temple according to their ancient customs. Trophimus was a Gentile Christian from Ephesus. He came with Paul to bring gifts to the poor Jewish Christians in Judea (Acts 20:4). The hostile Jews from Asia had seen him with Paul somewhere in Jerusalem.

The shout of Asian Jews was taken up by others, the uproar was heard beyond the temple walls, and people of the city came running to see what was going on. The enemies who had accused Paul of defiling the temple with Greeks would not themselves defile it with murder, so they dragged Paul outside.

The accusers meant to kill Paul, but they were handicapped by lack of weapons. Word very quickly reached the commander. No doubt the soldiers were on full alert whenever many people were in the temple court. They sprang into action immediately. Probably Paul's bruised and disheveled condition made it plain that the mob's fury was focused on him. The commander put him under arrest and had him bound with two chains. The commander told his men to take Paul up the steps

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## Church Of The Week



### Antioch Missionary Baptist Church

**Pastor:** Rev. Preston Pendergrass  
**Address:** 232 Skyland Avenue  
**Telephone:** (704) 332-4951  
**Membership:** 520  
**Founded:** 1886

**Services:** Sunday School - 9:45 a.m., Morning Worship - 10:45 a.m., Holy Communion Service, First Sundays - 12:20 p.m., Baptist Training Union, Sundays - 5:30 p.m., Bible Study, Sundays 6:30 p.m., Teacher-Prayer Meeting - Wednesdays - 7 - 9 p.m.

**Programs:** Youth Choir, Baptist Training Union, Young Adult Missionary Department, Junior Hymn Choir and Laymen's League, Lanes Creek Missionary Baptist Association, The United Baptist Association (an interracial fellowship) and The Baptist World Allowance.

**Quote from The Pastor:** "We at Antioch Missionary Baptist Church are striving to implement and maintain a "wholistic" ministry, fulfilling the needs of body, soul and mind of all age and interest groups. We endeavor to reach, convert and teach all who are unsaved and/or unchurched."

If you would like to have your church considered for the "Church of the Week," send your information as listed above in this week's featured church to Madelyn Hooker, Lifestyles & Religious Editor, The Charlotte Post, P.O. Box 30144, Charlotte, N.C. 28230.