

From the Grave: Martin Luther King Jr.'s Charge to African Americans Today

Read Time: 3 Minutes 32 Seconds

Today, America celebrates Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s 94th birthday. His work was tragically cut short 55 years ago, and there has been no one to fill the void left nationally or internationally.

This African American Baptist preacher forever changed the world by leading the Civil Rights Movement in its non-violent stand against racism and inequality in the United States and abroad. Yet his death created a leadership void filled by militant and divisive African American organizations in the 1960's, and, 55 years later, contemporary African American organizations are proving to be just as divisive as those against which Dr. King stood before his death. Now more than ever, we must remember Dr. King's message and continue his missions, applying them in a contemporary context to the United States and Israel, in preparation for Messiah's return.

Many people are aware of Dr. King's sacrifice to "save the soul of America," yet many are unaware of his international missions. One such mission was to Israel in 1967, because of his great love for the Holy Land and understanding of Israel's significance to the return of our Messiah.

Dr. King had planned to bring 5,000 African American Christians from the USA to Israel and Jordan in November of 1967 to incite peace in the region and share the gospel of Jesus Christ. He had received approval and welcome from both the Israeli and Jordanian governments. However, the 6-Day War in June 1967 caused Dr. King to cancel his plans, with a promise to reschedule the mission the following year.

Tragically, he was killed that year, and the mission never happened.

Immediately, the vacuum of leadership within the African American community was filled by the Nation of Islam and the Black Panther Movement, causing a rise in anti-Semitism and pro-Palestinian sentiments among African Americans as well as greater divisions between Christians and Jews. His death not only impacted the United States and the African American community, but it also impacted Israel and the Jewish community.

In 55 years, we have seen the spread of Islam, a rise in terrorism, a resurgence of racism in America, increased anti-Semitism globally, hateful and replacement rhetoric against Jews from African Americans who call themselves "Hebrew Israelites," destructive agendas from groups like Black Lives Matter and a severe polarization of believers by political differences.

Oh, do we need to hear from someone like Dr. King now!

Dr. King united people of various backgrounds and ethnicities to peacefully stand together for equality in the United States and peace in Israel, understanding that the real enemy was racism. We must begin to see this again, despite the rhetoric of African Americans who seek to address their own sense of inferiority by replacing the Jewish people, as with the Hebrew Israelites, and dismantling the institutions of marriage and family established by God, as with Black Lives Matter. What would Dr. King say to such groups?

His words from over half a century ago still ring true. As he addressed the nation of Islam, so we must address Hebrew Israelites. As he addressed the Black Panther Party, so must we address Black Lives Matter and other divisive organizations.

"The response of some of the so-called young militants does

not represent the position of the vast majority of Negroes. There are some who are color-consumed and they see a kind of mystique in blackness or in being colored, and anything non-colored is condemned. We do not follow that course ... Peace for Israel means security, and we must stand with all our might to protect her right to exist, its territorial integrity and the right to use whatever sea lanes it needs. Israel is one of the great outposts of democracy in the world, and a marvelous example of what can be done, how desert land can be transformed into an oasis of brotherhood and democracy. Peace for Israel means security, and that security must be a reality.” – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., March 25, 1968, speaking at the 68th annual convention of the Rabbinical Assembly.

 Out of a desire for affirmation and purpose, many African Americans have gathered around those who espouse divisive and erroneous rhetoric that only leads to tearing down others, destruction and division. As believers in Messiah, like Dr. King, we must recognize these divisive tactics, educate those who are misinformed by these groups and make a conscious effort to unite with others across all lines that would divide us.

Together, we must continue Dr. King’s missions to save the soul of America and ensure the peace of Israel. Fifty-five years later, it’s time, because our Messiah is soon to return!
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