

Prophecy Expert: What MLK's Speech Means for Your Spiritual Freedom

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ" (Rom. 8:1a).

This week we honor the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the great civil rights leader who gave us one of the most celebrated lines in modern English. Quoting an old spiritual, he stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on Aug. 28, 1963, and proclaimed to his listeners, "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

His rhetoric referred to the great hope and the audacious dream of a day when "all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing." He was talking about freedom from prejudice and discrimination.

But MLK also understood spiritual freedom. During his Birmingham civil rights campaign, Dr. King asked participants to pledge to "meditate daily on the teachings and life of Jesus" and to "walk and talk in the manner of love, for God is love." He implored them to "pray daily to be used by God in order that all men might be free." He knew the secret to freedom. He knew it was, at its root, a spiritual battle.

Nowhere is spiritual freedom proclaimed with more certainty than in Romans 8:1, one of the boldest, most freeing and revolutionary statements found in any sacred writing: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ." Condemnation is a curse. It is a poison on the planet that leads to despair, discouragement and religious fanaticism that cultivates terrorism and racism. Condemnation is symptomatic of a spiritual life gone wrong.

Condemnation is easy to recognize because:

–You feel guilty all the time.

–You're fearful.

–You live with a profound sense of rejection.

You might know intellectually that God has accepted you and forgiven you, but you don't feel loved or accepted. This can cause you to reject others through prejudice or fear.

So what is required here is a paradigm shift. An exchange of one line of thinking for another. And that's exactly what the Christian life is—an exchange. We exchange an old life for a new one, bad habits with new ones, a death sentence for the gift of eternal life.

We replace fear with freedom.

You cannot be free and be controlled by fear. Fear is the worst kind of tyranny and oppression. It hinders life and paralyzes its victims. Fear quenches the Spirit, and deceives us into forgetting our heavenly Father, who promises, "For I know the plans that I have for you, says the Lord, plans for peace and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jer. 29:11).

As I made clear Romans 8:1 is one of the most liberating statements to ring through eternity. And, for those who have given their lives to Jesus, it is the truth that will set us free and help us to love others without fear and prejudice.

When I contemplate this powerful Scripture, I want to echo the words of Martin Luther King, Jr. in celebration, and cry aloud with joy, "Free at last, thank God Almighty, we are free at last!" {eoa}

Ray Bentley is a pastor, prophecy expert and author. He founded Maranatha Chapel in August 1984, and the church now serves 7,000 people weekly. His daily radio show can be heard across the United States and on stations around the world. His latest series—"The Elijah Chronicles"—is a fiction series based on end-times events. The first two in this three-part series is available [here](#):