

**STBC IMPACT**  
**Black History Month Bible Study**

February 7, 2024; Written by Dr. Chris Williamson

**Opening Thought:** Black history is not only American history; it's also Biblical history. The Black experience in America is greatly intertwined with the experience of the Hebrew people in Scripture. So many of the Negro spirituals attest to this fact. And as we think about two great leaders who helped to shape our faith, we will discover they had so many things in common.

On **April 3**, 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered what would be his last speech at Mason Temple in Memphis, TN. On the very next day he was assassinated while standing on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel. If you were to go back and listen to that final speech, which has been entitled, "**I've Been To The Mountaintop**," you will hear how prophetic it was. On the day before he died, Dr. King said that God allowed him to go to the mountaintop where he was allowed to look over and see the Promised Land. He said emphatically and prophetically, "*I may not get there with you, but we as a people will get to the Promised Land!*"

**Text:** Deuteronomy 34:1 – 8

**Title:** "MOSES, MARTIN, AND A MOUNTAINTOP"

Besides sharing a final mountaintop experience with God, followed by an immediate death, both Moses and Martin had many striking and even uncanny similarities. Here are some:

	Moses	MLK
1. Their Names	When Moses was born as a slave in Egypt, his parents hid him for three months. More than likely he was given a Hebrew birth name. When Pharaoh's daughter found him in the Nile she named him Moses, which means, "to draw out." Prophetically, Moses would draw Israel out of Egypt after 400 years of enslavement.	At birth, King was named Michael King, Jr. At the age of 5, his father traveled to Germany and was inspired by the Protestant Reformation leader Martin Luther. As a result, Daddy King changed his and his son's name to Martin Luther. Prophetically, MLK, Jr. gave his life protesting injustice and reforming the church's social justice involvement.
2. Their Siblings	Moses had a sister and a brother. His older sister was named Miriam and his older brother was named Aaron.	Martin had a sister and a brother. His older sister was named Christine, and his younger brother was named Alfred Daniels (AD).

<p>3. Their Education</p>	<p>Moses received the best education in the land. He was first educated by his Hebrew parents, Amram and Jochebed. This education caused him to know of his ancestor's God, their patriarchs, and their plight. He was later educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and became powerful in speech and in action (Acts 7:22).</p>	<p>King was such a gifted student that he skipped grades 9 and 12 before entering Morehouse College, an HBC, at the age of 15. After graduating with a degree in sociology, he earned a divinity degree from Crozer Theological Seminary and was the class president and valedictorian. King went on to earn his Ph.D. from Boston University in 1955.</p>
<p>4. Their Calling</p>	<p>At the age of 80, God called Moses at the burning bush to go and confront Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to set God's people free from slavery. Moses reluctantly accepted his calling and was immediately thrust into an international spotlight.</p>	<p>At the age of 18, King accepted his call to ministry as his way to serve humanity. At the age of 25, he became the pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, and at the age of 26 he reluctantly became the leader of the Montgomery Bus Boycott.</p>
<p>5. Their Wives</p>	<p>At the age of 40, Moses married Zipporah, an Ethiopian, Black African woman. Zipporah would prove to be a strong and supportive wife throughout Moses' ministry, giving him two children and even saving his life on one occasion.</p>	<p>At the age of 24, King married Coretta Scott, a Black woman. Coretta proved to be a strong, supportive, and influential woman throughout King's ministry. After his death, she became active in the Women's movement, founded the King Center in Atlanta, opposed apartheid, and succeeded in getting legislation to make MLK Day a national holiday in 1983. After birthing four children together, Coretta died in 2006, at age 78.</p>
<p>6. Their Faith</p>	<p>Moses had a dramatic encounter with God at the age of 80 on Mount Horeb when God appeared to him in the burning bush. His life</p>	<p>Though he was the son and grandson of preachers, King questioned many things about the Christian faith as a young man. When his house was bombed, he had a very</p>

	was forever changed by the encounter.	dramatic encounter with God at his kitchen table.
7. Their Giftedness	Though he gave God the excuse that he was a stutterer, Acts 7:22 says that Moses was powerful in speech. He spoke to Pharaoh and to kings. The book of Deuteronomy is a series of speeches by Moses to the Israelites about to go into the Promised Land.	King was thoroughly gifted in the areas of leadership, intellect, and verbal and written communication. His gifts shined brightest on the steps of the Washington Monument in 1963 when he extemporaneously declared "I Have A Dream."
8. Their Writings	Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible, known as the Pentateuch or the Law. The books of Moses are: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy	King wrote 5 books: <i>Strides Toward Freedom</i> , <i>Why We Can't Wait</i> , <i>The Measure of A Man</i> , <i>Strength to Love</i> , and <i>Where Do We Go From Here?</i>
9. Their Temperament	Moses was said to be the humblest man on the earth (Number 12:3). Because of this his people regularly targeted him, including his family, but Moses would often fall on his face to pray for his enemies.	King was considered a humble, down to earth man. He won over 700 awards, including the Nobel Peace Prize, but because of his meekness, he was often verbally maligned and physically assaulted.
10. Their Flaws	The Bible records that Moses was a murderer (Exodus 2:12). He killed an Egyptian, possibly with his bare hands. In addition to being humble, Moses also had a bad temper. He threw down the first set of the Ten Commandments (Ex. 32:19), and he struck the rock in the desert two times out of frustration when God told him to speak to it (Numbers 20:11 – 12).	Though he was an advocate of non-violence, King was no coward. He said that the angriest he ever became was when he first experienced racism at age 15. Twenty-three years after his death, an academic inquiry was made showing that portions of his dissertation were plagiarized in that he did not adequately cite his sources. Also, reports of his marital infidelity are widely known.
11. Their Adversaries	Most of Moses' opposition came from his own people. His family members, the sons	King was resisted by White racists with political and legal power, and by White,

	of Korah, and the entire nation resisted and rejected his leadership at various intervals in the journey towards the Promised Land.	religious moderates who questioned him and his methods. He was also ridiculed by Black activists Malcolm X and Huey Newton
12. Their Closest Friend	Moses' brother Aaron was likely his closest friend, but there was two times Aaron violated that friendship. One was when he questioned Moses' prophetic office, and the other was when he made the golden calf while Moses was on the mountain w/God.	King said that Ralph Abernathy was his closest friend. The two men went to jail together numerous times. But it would be Abernathy who would betray his friend through a book he wrote in 1989 called, <i>And the Walls Came Tumbling Down</i> .
13. Their Victories	Moses experienced many military and spiritual victories while leading God's people in the wilderness. Moses saw God provide manna from heaven, water from a rock, and the defeating of nations.	The Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955 led to city buses being desegregated. King won a huge victory with the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and he led a march from Selma to Montgomery to usher in the Voting Rights Acts of 1965.
14. Their Deaths	Moses' life can be divided up into three 40 year periods. He died on the mountain top at the age of 120. He was not able to enter into the Promised Land because of his sin, but he was allowed to look at it from a distance.	King said on April 3 <sup>rd</sup> , that God took him up to the mountain top to look over and see the Promised Land. He said, "I may not get there with you." The next day, he was shot at 6:00 pm and pronounced dead at 7:00pm.

**Conclusion:** We saw how two men, one Hebrew and one Black, were used by God to liberate their people at different points in history. Moses and Martin had many things in common besides dying after a mountaintop experience with God. Our lives are forever changed because of their commitment to God and their diligence to serve the LORD's people.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What did you learn tonight or become reminded of in a fresh way? Name one thing you can apply.
2. Where does most of your resistance come from? Is it from family, friends, or outsiders?
3. What excuses have you given to God for why you didn't (or don't) want to serve Him?