

2008 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday Celebration
January 20, 2008 - Love Centerplex
Mayor Van W. Johnson, Sr., Expression Speech

I consider it an honor for me to join with you this evening, in celebration of the life of an America Hero and a Prophet of God, who fought and spoke out against racial injustices in America.

Are you living, in the Promised Land?

On the evening of April 4, 1968, while standing on the 2nd floor balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis Tennessee, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., lost his life in the struggle for freedom and equality at the young age of 39.

However, on the night before his death, Dr. King stood before the congregation at the Bishop Charles Mason Church of God and delivered his famous, "I've Been to the Mountaintop" sermon. This sermon was the last Dr. King preached and a prophetic message where King foretold of his pending death and of God allowing him like Moses, to look over into the Promised Land.

We don't know exactly who or what God allowed King to see when he look over that mountaintop, but what we surmise is that God allowed him to see a people who had suffered from racial injustices, being allowed to partake in the unlimited bounty of the American Dream.

As King looked over the Promised Land, perhaps he had seen Thurgood Marshall the young African-American lawyer, who was appointed to the United States Supreme Court, after earlier arguing before the same Court, in Brown vs. Board of Education.

Or, perhaps he saw Rosa Parks Living in the Promised Land, the 42-year-old work weary Alabama seamstress, who refused to give up her seat to a white man, awarded the Congressional Gold Medal.

We really don't know, but possibly, King seen the Little Rock Nine living in the Promised Land, the nine little Black boys and girls that were blocked by the Arkansas National Guard from entering an all-white high school, went on to receive degrees from all-white colleges.

Maybe King had seen the victims of Bloody Sunday living in the Promised Land, the marchers, who marched 50 miles from Selma to Montgomery. Whipped and clubbed by the police for supporting your right to vote. Just maybe he saw them taking an active role in their communities and voting in every election.

It is hard for me to say what King saw, but perhaps he seen the unchained sons of former slaves entering into the Promised Land, offering up praises and thanksgivings unto God for their deliverance.

I can only image that King seen a renewed people, taking full advantage of the freedom and opportunities that living in the Promise Land had to offer; such as a free high school education, unfettered access to Institutions of high learning and business ownership.

I'm not sure, but maybe King seen, Black men and women living in the Promise Land raising their families together. The Black men standing as leaders and training their young sons how to grow up to become strong Black men and Black women teaching their young daughters how to grow up to be respectable Black women.

We really don't know who or what Dr. King seen as he looked over the horizon of that mountaintop. However, we do know that King fought so that you and I can have access to the Promises Land.

Because of this and before I sit down tonight, there is only one question left to ask: Are you living, in the Promised Land?