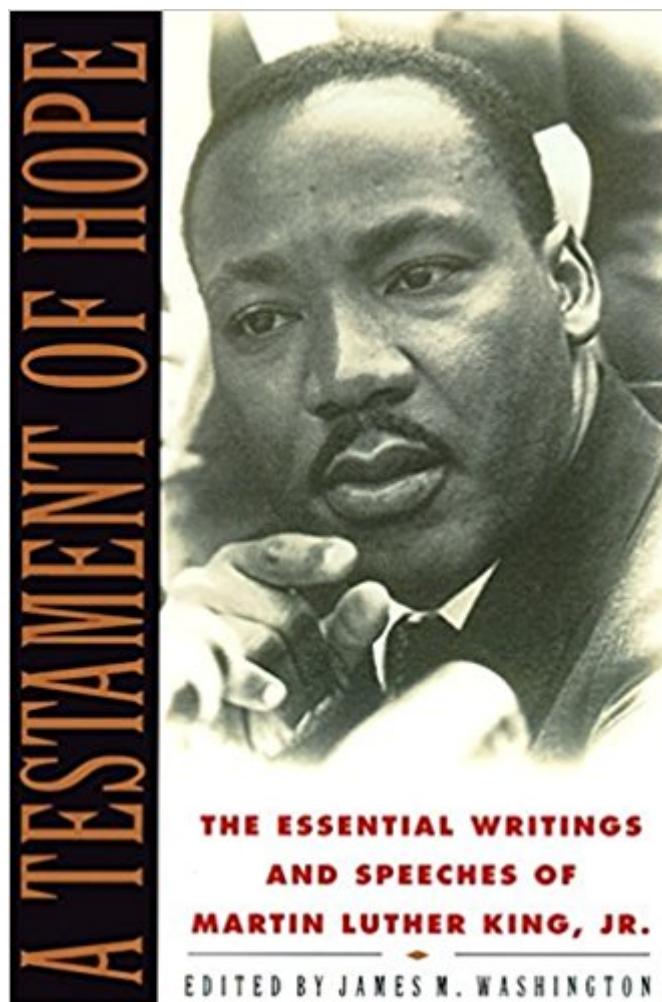


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A Testament Of Hope: The Essential Writings And Speeches Of Martin Luther King, Jr.



Synopsis

"We've got some difficult days ahead," civil rights activist Martin Luther King, Jr., told a crowd gathered at Memphis's Clayborn Temple on April 3, 1968. "But it really doesn't matter to me now because I've been to the mountaintop. . . . And I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight that we as a people will get to the promised land." These prophetic words, uttered the day before his assassination, challenged those he left behind to see that his "promised land" of racial equality became a reality; a reality to which King devoted the last twelve years of his life. These words and others are commemorated here in the only major one-volume collection of this seminal twentieth-century American prophet's writings, speeches, interviews, and autobiographical reflections. *A Testament of Hope* contains Martin Luther King, Jr.'s essential thoughts on nonviolence, social policy, integration, black nationalism, the ethics of love and hope, and more.

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Customer Reviews

Yesterday, the 40th anniversary of MLK's assassination, I spent the better part of the day thumbing through *A Testament of Hope*. The book is an old friend of mine. I've read and reread it for nearly twenty years now, both privately and with students in at least a dozen classes. What I like so much about editor James Washington's collection is its comprehensiveness. In a single volume, one finds MLK's thoughts on nonviolence, civil rights and integration, the Vietnam War and poverty, Christianity and social responsibility, and justice and morality. His ideas are conveyed here through

essays, sermons, interviews, and lengthy, meaty excerpts from his five books. Everything that one could want is here, including what I personally take to be his very best work: "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" (1963), "Love, Law, and Civil Disobedience" (1961), "A Christmas Sermon on Peace" (1967), "A Time to Break Silence" (1967), the "I Have a Dream" speech (1961), and Stride Toward Freedom's masterful discussion of the tactics and principles of nonviolence (1958). Today, four decades after his death, the country is still struggling to grow into MLK's vision of reconciliation and nonviolence. One can only imagine how sad he would be at the post-9/11 turn toward militarism the nation has taken, the current wave of sentiment against Latino immigrants, the constant economic disparity between white households and African American ones, or the upswing in hate crimes against Muslims. In re-reading A Testament of Hope, I was reminded yet again of how very much we need a present-day prophet of King's caliber, vision, and courage, and of how very grateful I am that we once had King himself.

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