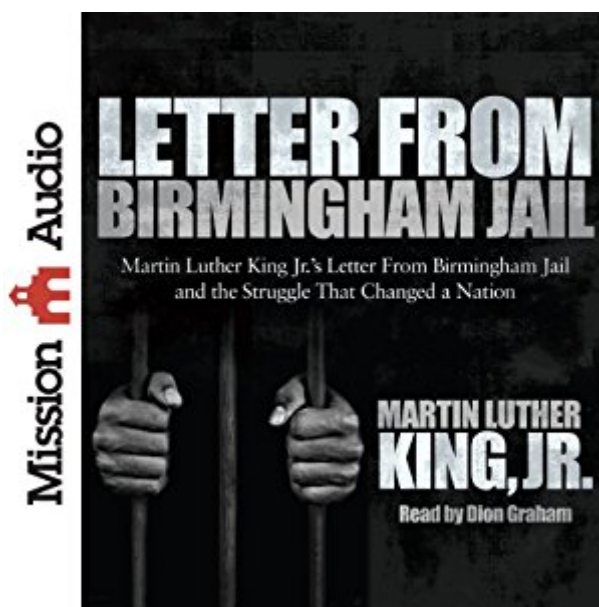


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# Letter From Birmingham Jail



## Synopsis

Audie Award Finalist, Original Work, 2013 April 16th, the year is 1963. Birmingham, Alabama, has had a spring of nonviolent protests known as the Birmingham Campaign, seeking to draw attention to the segregation against blacks by the city government and downtown retailers. The organizers longed to create a nonviolent tension so severe that the powers that be would be forced to address the rampant racism head on. Recently arrested was Martin Luther King, Jr.... It is there in that jail cell that he writes this letter; on the margins of a newspaper he pens this defense of nonviolence against segregation. His accusers, though many, in this case were not the white racist leaders or retailers he protested against, but eight black men who saw him as "other" and as too extreme. To them and to the world he defended the notion that "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere".

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Absolutely a must listen to for everyone

am must read as important today as when it was written

Nice reading...

This review, by Dr. Nicholson, has been provided courtesy of Desert Bible Institute ([www.desertbibleinstitute.com](http://www.desertbibleinstitute.com)). This was a truly amazing recording. After hearing this recording, I

was struck by how Dr. King could take so many ideas from so many sources and smoothly and coherently tie them together. In this speech, Dr. King eloquently uses parallelism, allusion, and metaphor to paint a clear image of what the black community was experiencing in the South at this time. His arguments are clear and his definitions are accurate. Just as the pastors he was speaking to, I felt compelled and duty-bound to address the injustices he was speaking about rather than settling for a safe middle-ground. After hearing this, I feel a need to look for areas in my life where I choose wellbeing and effortlessness over uprightness and evenhandedness. I am currently looking for other audio recordings of his famous speeches so that I can be further blessed by one of the most persuasive and charismatic speakers and teachers of the last century. Additionally, I plan to use this speech as the basis of several assignments for my students so that they can see how a truly great writer expresses himself and persuades his audience. If they can even begin to emulate Dr. King, they will truly be great writers. Dion Graham was the perfect narrator for this recording. He has a strong, clear voice that rivals Dr. King's. While Graham spoke in a style similar to Dr. King's, he was by no means trying to do an imitation. It seemed to me that Graham has done his research however. He had a clear understanding of the rhythm, emphasis, and musical quality of Dr. King. His performance was engaging and a true tribute to Dr. King. I plan on finding other works by Graham to listen to in the future. Trent Nicholson, Ph.D., D.Min. Desert Bible Institute, President

I had no idea what I was letting myself in for when I started to listen to this recording. When I found that Martin Luther King Jr was addressing pastors who verbally attacked his modus operandi I started to get interested. I was drawn in by his masterful use of words to persuade, draw images and address issues encompassing oppression but in no way limited to the subject. It is clear that he was an extremely intelligent well versed man who found the time not to pressure, to attack or tear down, but to uplift. To elucidate and explain with clear arguments and a coherency of thought I found remarkable. A true joy to listen to this book and an extremely sad state of affairs to know that so much that he touched on in the 1960 is still an issue today. WaAr

King sits in a jail arrested on Good Friday for standing up for his rights and the rights of others. On April 12th he is smuggled a newspaper and sees the headline "A Call To Unity" written by a clergyman criticizing King and his methods, calling him an "Outsider". King wrote his reply on April 16, 1963 on anything he could find to write on, the newspaper, scraps of paper and eventually a notepad. "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly,

affects all indirectly. "Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider." Every American should read or listen to this letter. It is one of the most powerful essays ever written. Dion Graham's voice lent itself to Dr King's cadence and had me imagining that I was actually listening to King recite his essay. The power of the pen as a means for change is strongly evident in Martin Luther King's eloquent words. MLK is truly a hero for the people.

This letter was written in response to a group of African American preachers who were calling for an end to the nonviolent resistance to the racist order in Birmingham, Alabama. This included sit-ins, marches and violating a court order to end all such demonstrations. King was arrested for violating this order (yes, he was arrested for speaking his mind and being involved in a peaceful assembly - a double violation of his First Amendment rights) and kept in squalid conditions in the overcrowded Birmingham jail. Letter from Birmingham Jail was written, at first, on scrap bits of paper and smuggled out by way of his lawyers and re-assembled by his supporters on the outside. The last parts were written on a note pad. The fact that it was written in such a herky-jerky fashion and yet is so cohesive and consistent throughout is simply amazing to me considering how much I go back and revise as I write and discard entire paragraphs as I go along. The document itself is more than just a civil rights letter. It is one of those basic expressions of what it is to be an American and why it is so important to guard those rights. As I listened, I was struck by the irony that his arguments were so much like those of the Founding Fathers. In fact, they work so well because King was intentionally using their arguments as his arguments. He was intentionally using the language of those that would oppose his demands for equal rights against them. The letter abounds with Biblical references, references to the Ancient Greeks, the Founders and even to his namesake, Martin Luther. It uses the philosophical underpinnings of Western Culture to demand that Western Culture live up to its own ideals. And, it is brilliant. I am a history teacher and I would feel completely comfortable placing this document right next to Jefferson's Preamble to the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Payne's Common Sense and Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and Second Inaugural Address in a list of required readings for an American history class. Although this was written as a letter, it reads remarkably well as a speech. Dion Graham's performance is excellent. Of course, it helps when your source material is so good. But, do not take this at a swipe at Graham's abilities. He did not choose to mimic King. Instead, he read it in his own voice and he nailed all of the points perfectly. I do not think anyone could read it any better. I rate this audiobook 5 stars out of 5.

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