

“STOP SAYING... Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Wasn’t A Christian”

Dr. Chris Williamson/ February 11, 2026/ Gather & Grow

Intro: Written on a marker at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, TN where the **Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.** was assassinated are these words found in **Genesis 37:19 – 20**, “*Then they said to one another, ‘Look, this dreamer is coming! Come therefore, let us now kill him... and we shall see what will become of his dreams!’*”

It’s been said, “You can kill the dream, but you can’t kill the dreamer.” Yet there seems to be a calculated effort to kill the dreamer’s legacy and impact by killing his character over and over again. These dubious assaults come largely from today’s evangelicals in particular.

Who said the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King wasn’t a Christian? For starters, the late **Dr. John MacArthur** (1939 – 2025), a former evangelical pastor and author, has made several comments over the years questioning the faith of Dr. King. Before passing away in 2025, MacArthur stated in a Q&A session in 2024 that “Dr. King was not a Christian at all.”

Disparagers of Dr. King will question: **1) His Theological Beliefs, 2) His Political Affiliations; and 3) His Moral Integrity.** In the interest of time, we will only cover two points.

1) They Question Dr. King’s Theological Beliefs

- Critics say the papers King wrote in seminary prove he didn’t believe in orthodox Christian doctrines, such as, the virgin birth, the deity and resurrection of Christ.
- Detractors of King say he preached a “social gospel” based on “Liberation Theology.”
- Critics say King didn’t preach repentance or a call to personal salvation.

2) They Question Dr. King’s Moral Integrity

- Opposers rely on the FBI’s surveillance of Dr. King which allegedly conclude he was a serial adulterer.
- Haters quote negative things that King’s friend Ralph Abernathy wrote about him in his 1989 autobiography.

Evangelical Hypocrisy

- 1) They condone the unorthodox theological beliefs of the Founding Fathers.
- 2) They downplay how their favorite presidents and theologians owned slaves or were sympathetic to the institution.
- 3) They excuse the sexual immorality of their “Christian heroes.”

Break Out Question: Why do you think so much effort is made by conservatives and evangelicals to disparage the life and legacy of Dr. King?

Correcting the Claims

- 1) Dr. King's writings in seminary _____
- 2) Dr. King's conversion to Jesus Christ _____
- 3) Dr. King's preaching _____
- 4) Dr. King's morality _____

Dr. King's Christian Faith

- He used non-violent tactics against violence
- He believed America could change for the better
- He wasn't afraid to be unpopular
- He uplifted the poor
- He loved his enemies
- He wasn't afraid to suffer
- He wasn't afraid to die

Closing Thoughts: If Dr. King wasn't a real Christian, please show me someone who is. We cannot separate what we believe from what we do. In fact, what we do is evidence of what we believe. The proof that Dr. King was a believer in Jesus is found in actions that built God's kingdom on earth. We need stop asking about King and be concerned with ourselves.

James 2:14 – 24, ¹⁴ What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? ¹⁷ Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. ¹⁸ But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! ²⁰ But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? ²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? ²² Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? ²³ And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” And he was called the friend of God. ²⁴ You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.