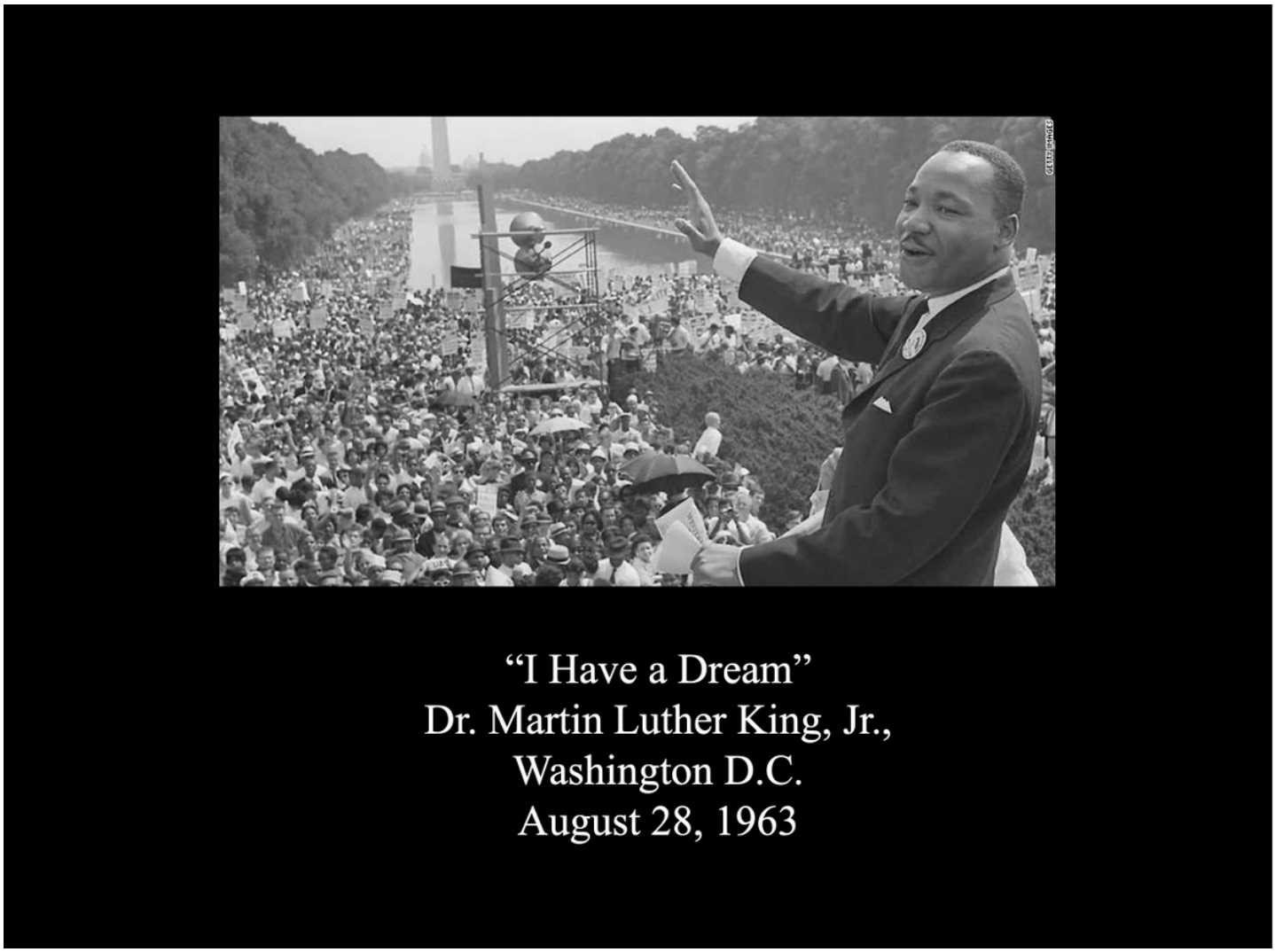
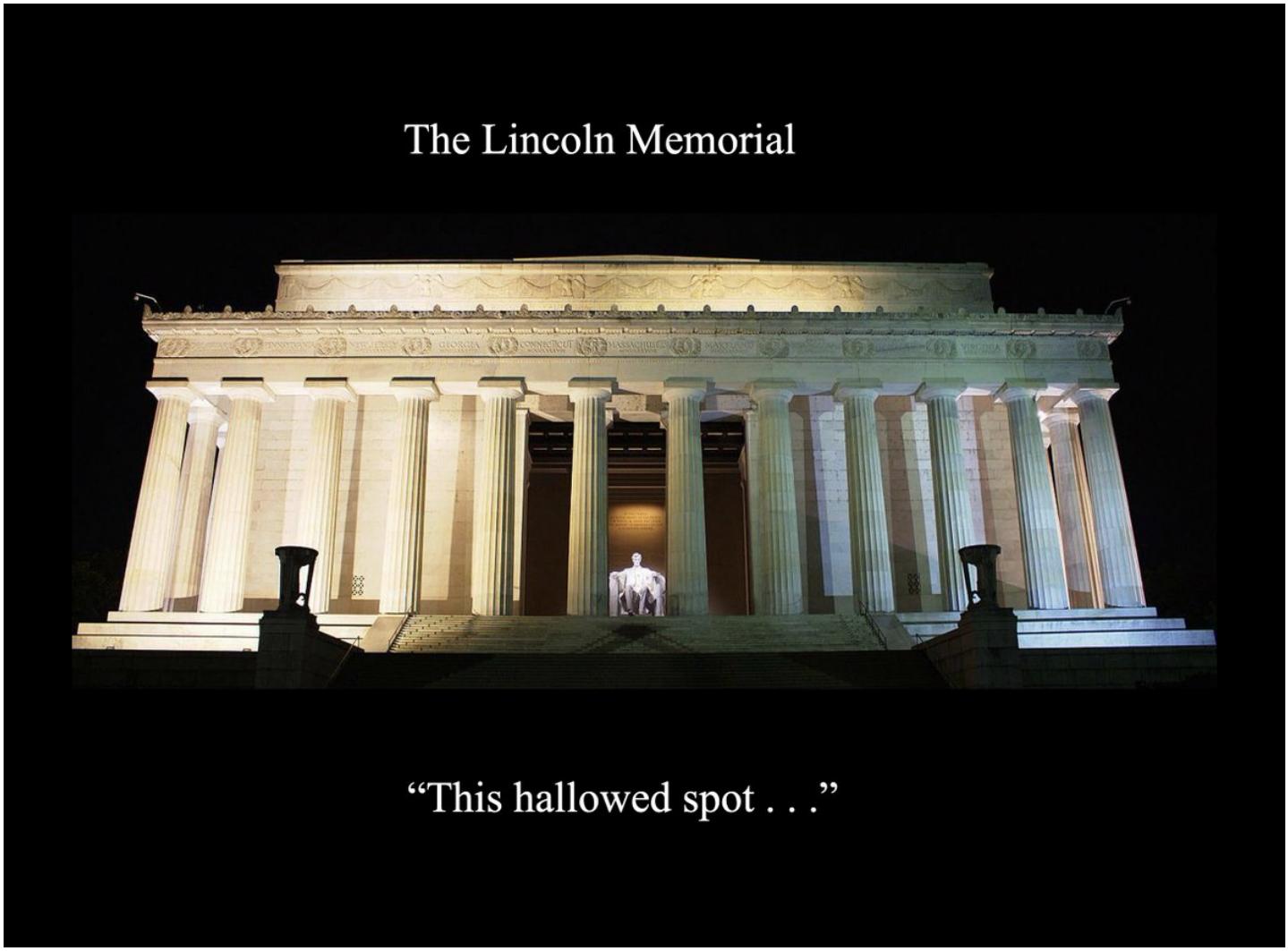
Twitter Thread by kurt lash

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1/ The “I Have a Dream" speech is one of the most extraordinary speeches in American history. You should read it again. First, a few thoughts about the common American heritage Dr. King relied upon in calling Americans to rededicate themselves to the unfinished work of freedom.

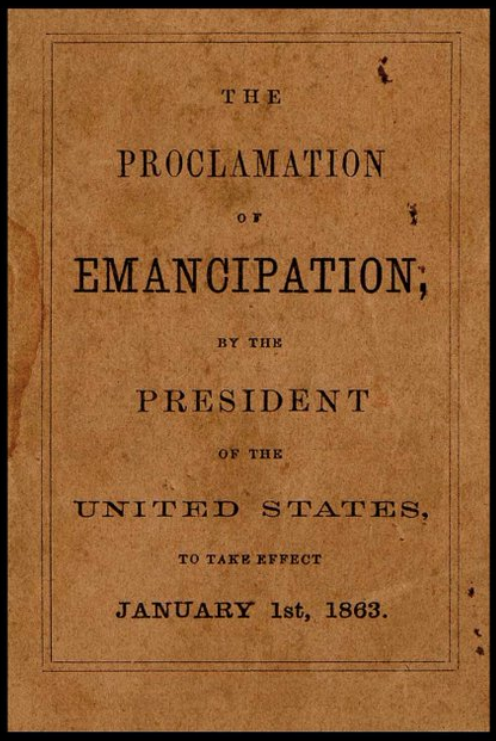


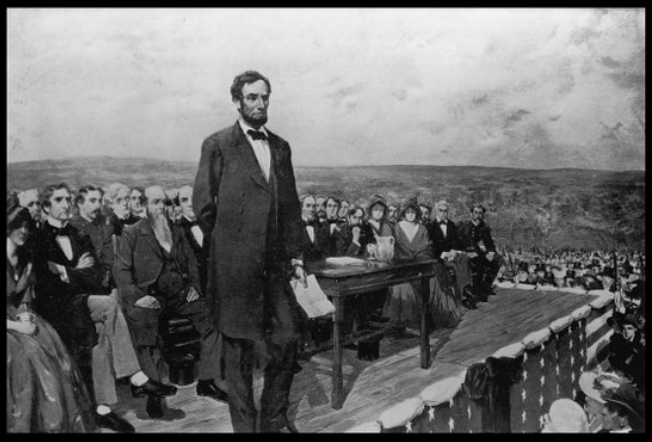
2/ Dr. King delivered his speech in what he called the “hallowed spot” of the Lincoln memorial. More than a picturesque backdrop, King relied on America’s reverence for Lincoln and the common celebration of Lincoln’s words and acts, especially the Emancipation Proclamation.



3/ "Five score years ago…" King echoes the words of the Gettysburg Address. Like Lincoln, King invokes the Declaration of Independence and the fundamental principles of American freedom, "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Every person in that crowd knew these words.

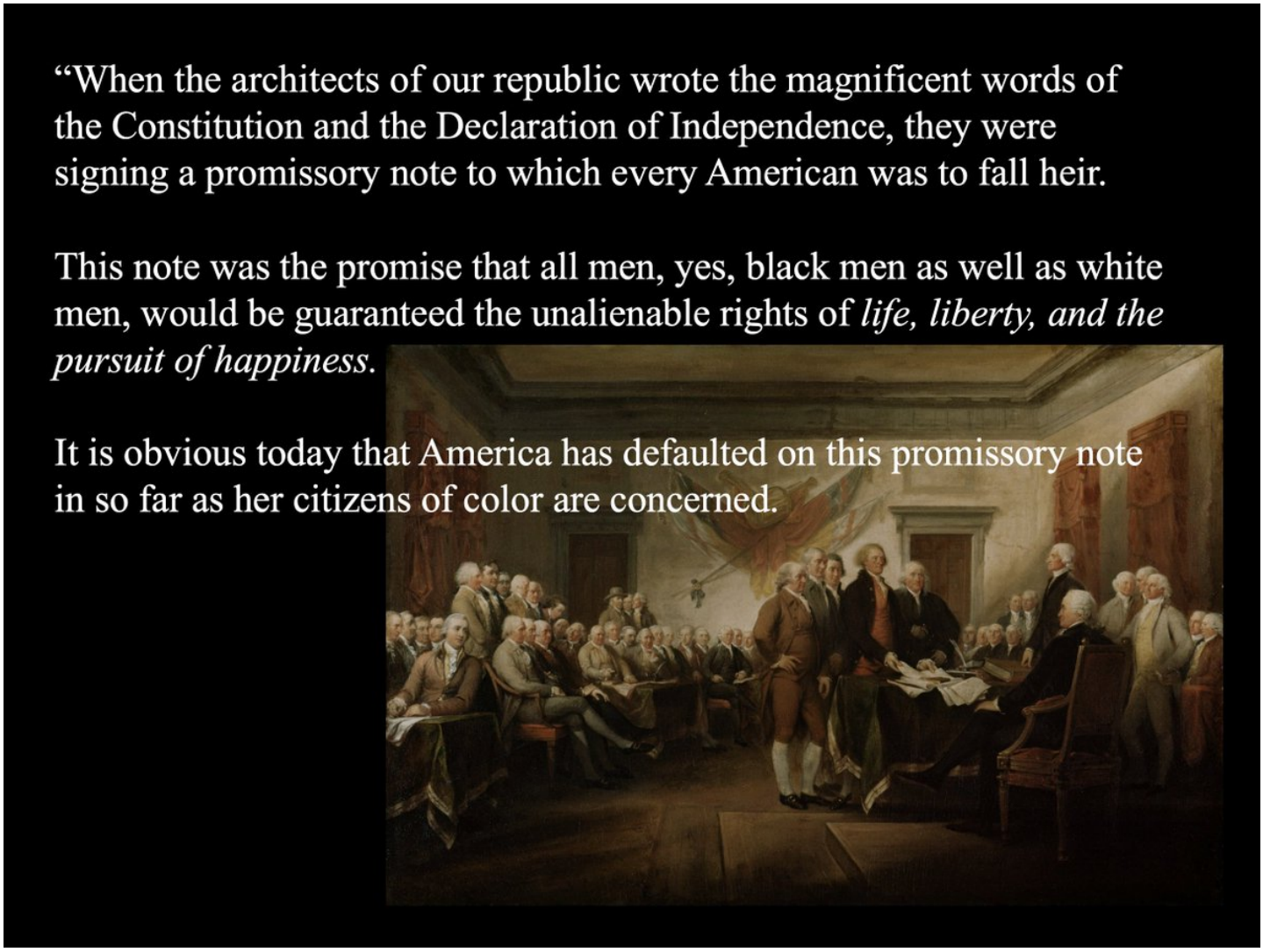
"Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. . . ."


THE
PROCLAMATION
OF
EMANCIPATION;
BY THE
PRESIDENT
OF THE
UNITED STATES,
TO TAKE EFFECT
JANUARY 1st, 1863.



"Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. . . .

4/ The Declaration, Constitution and Emancipation Proclamation declared and established the fundamental American principles of freedom that all Americans knew and believed in. But these principles and promises remained unfulfilled for black Americans.



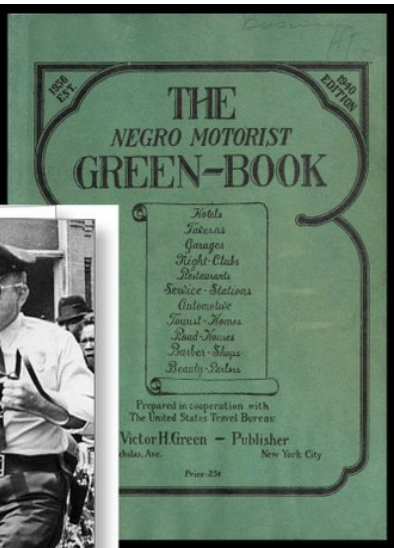
5/ Lincoln's audience knew the history of slavery and many had suffered personal loss in the ongoing war. Dr. King's audience knew the history of violent racism, segregation, and unequal economic opportunity. The Proclamation freed the slaves, "but the Negro still is not free."

We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality;

we can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities; . . .

Alabama — with its vicious racists, with its Governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification







6/ Carved into the wall behind Dr. King was Lincoln's Second Inaugural and his plea to act "with malice towards none." Likewise, King beseeched his followers "not to seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom" with "bitterness and hatred" and violent protest.

In the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. . . .



With malice towards none . . .

We must not allow our creative protests to degenerate into physical violence

7/ Then, in one of the most amazing passages in American history, Martin Luther King calls on every American to share his dream. It is the most American of dreams, rooted in Declaration of Independence, the belief in God and the self-evident truth that all men are created equal.

"[E]ven though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed, "*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.*" . . .

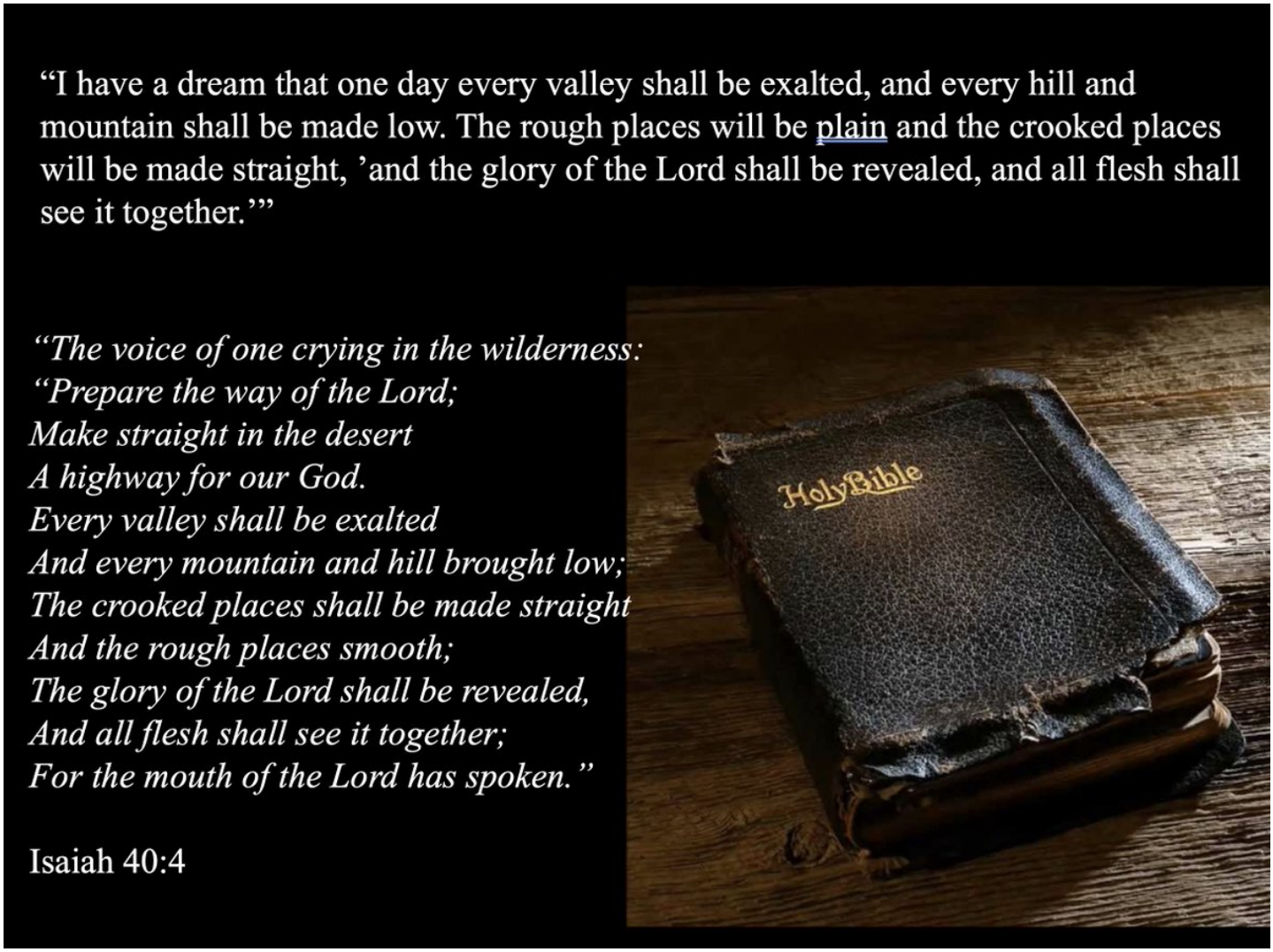
I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today!





8/ "The crooked places made straight…" King soars and soars, carrying all America with him, up to the very throne of God. Earthly ideas fade away. This is the word of God, spoken in the Book, known to every American, declared in houses of worship throughout America.

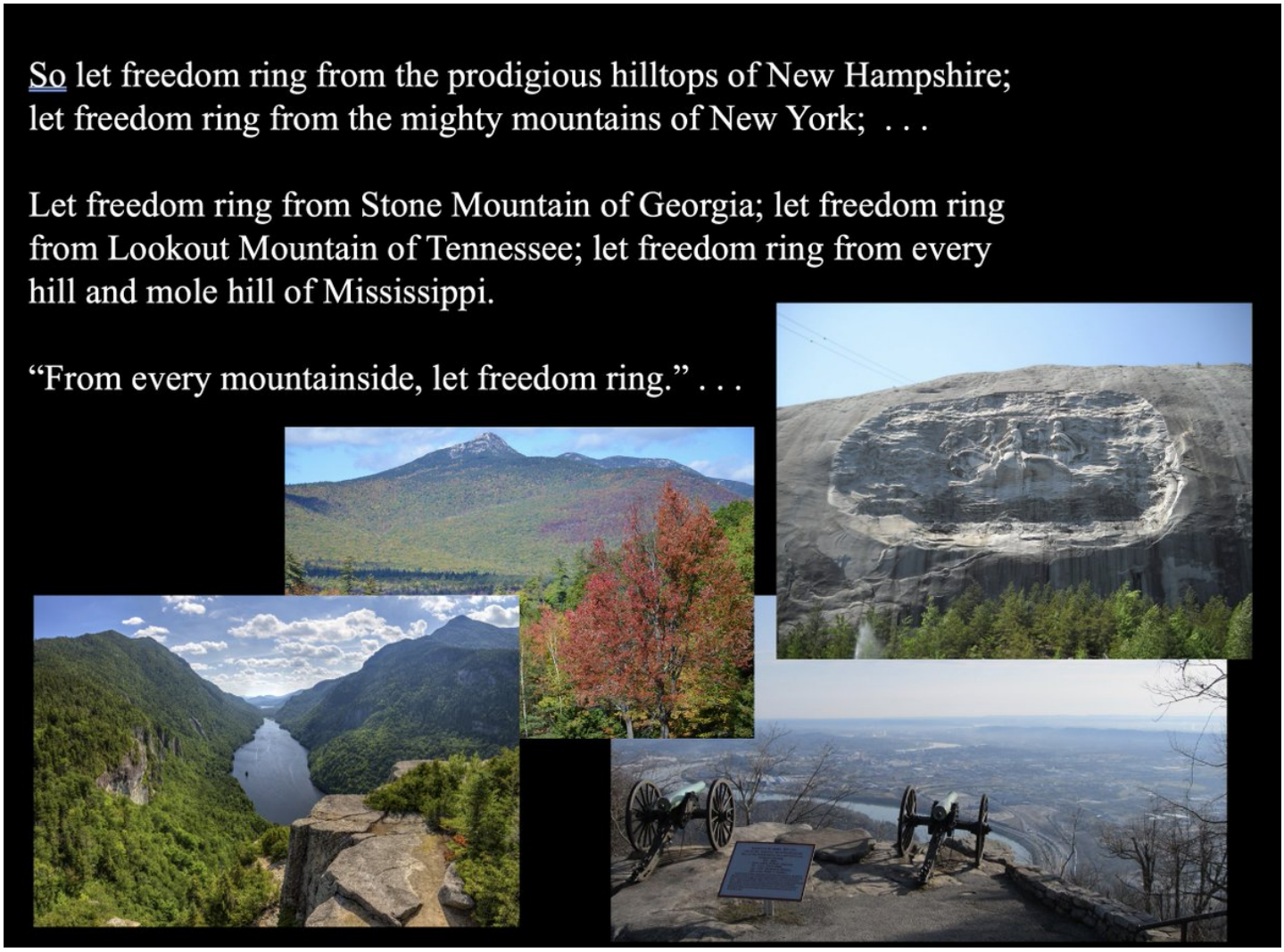


9/ "My country tis of thee…" King then descends from the glorious heavens to most mundane and commonplace experiences of every American child—the pledge of allegiance and song that once began every day in every school in America.

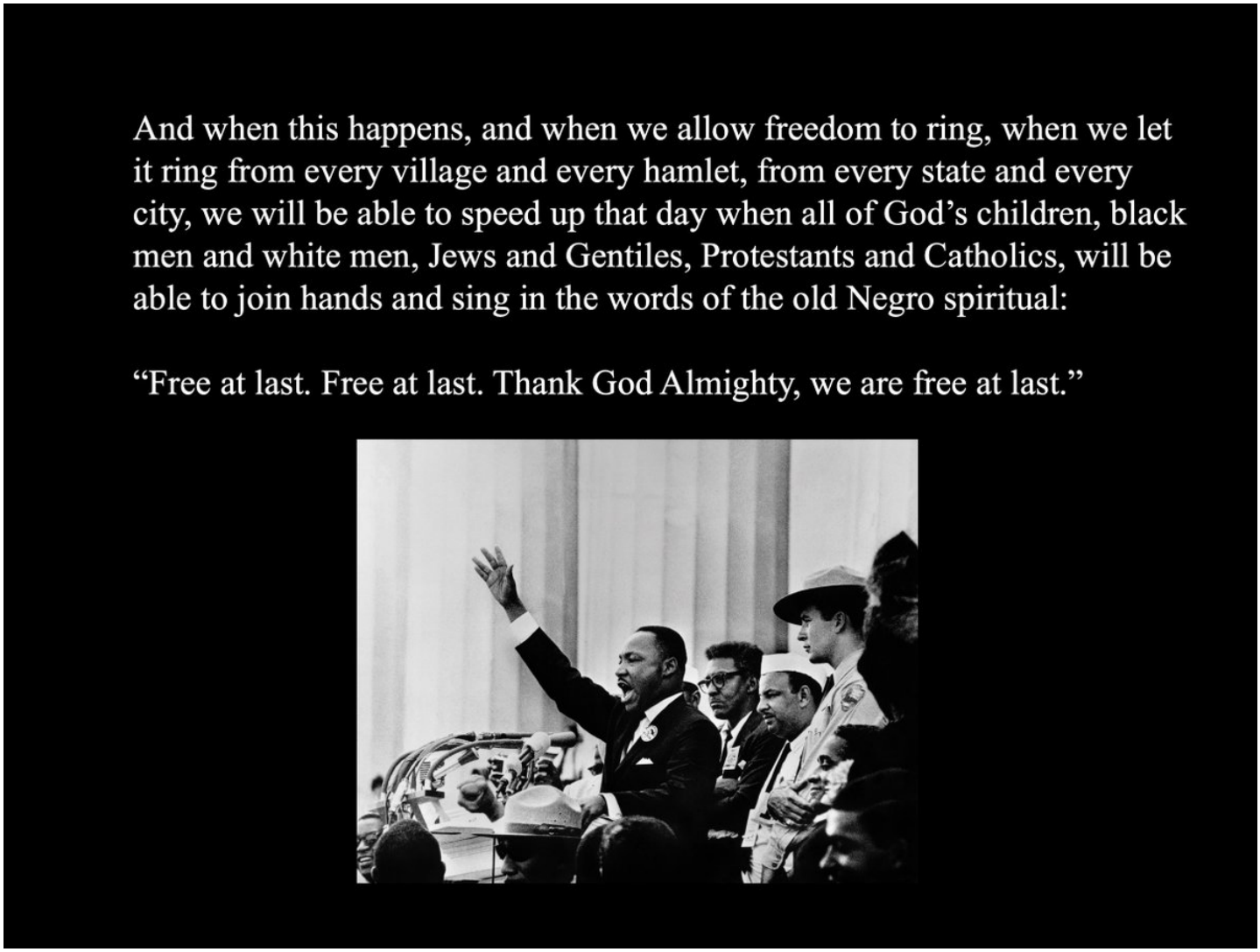
This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning, "My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my father died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring."



10/ "Let freedom ring . . ." From this humble piece of cloth, indelibly stamped into the memory of every American, King lets the song of freedom ring from every mountain side, from the New Hampshire peaks to Stone Mountain, Georgia and its carving of Davis, Lee and Jackson.



11/ Having given America a dream formed from the clay of American culture and beliefs, King then takes us to the promised land. We live this dream to "speed up that day" when we will be brothers and sisters in the kingdom of God, where ALL of us will be free at last.



12/fin. Read the speech again. As you do, hear how Dr. King draws from the deep well of common American culture and beliefs. Read his speech on this day and contemplate its power. Contemplate what we have lost. https://t.co/davm1o0tok

