

## James Baldwin: My Dungeon Shook: A Letter to my Nephew

*In 1962, the Progressive Magazine published a letter James Baldwin wrote to his nephew. The letter is excerpted from his novel, [The Fire Next Time](#), published in 1963. In this letter Baldwin shared his thoughts for his nephew's future in a nation with a history of racism.*

*Throughout the month of February, the full letter as well as reflections and other readings or videos will be on the church's website. [CLICK HERE](#) to access those materials. Our hope is that you will hear the words and the sentiment expressed in this letter and ask yourself why Baldwin felt he needed to write this letter and what we can do to make this kind of letter unnecessary.*

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### Week Two Reflections

Baldwin writes that while some white people believe Black people are not inferior, they will not act on this belief. To act would lead to a loss of their (white people's) identity. How has this played out in our history as a nation? How has this played out in your life? How can you change this?

### Additional Studies

Read this piece in [The Atlantic about the Baldwin Buckley Debate](#).

The subject of the debate was "The American dream is at the expense of the American negro." The debate was held at the University of Cambridge in 1965. The university had invited segregationist politicians, all of whom declined to participate. Buckley was known for being against the racism he witnessed in his colleagues while still supporting segregation. He fully expected to easily defeat Baldwin.

[CLICK HERE](#) to watch the debate.

What did you learn? What surprised you? What didn't? How will you use this debate to adjust your perceptions of American history?