



## The Fire Next Time

Author: [James Baldwin](#) [1]

The Dial Press, New York, NY, 1992, pp. 120

Originally published: 1963

This now famous work contains two essays written on the occasion of the centennial of the Emancipation Proclamation - "My Dungeon Shook. Letter to my Nephew on the One Hundredth Anniversary of Emancipation," and "Down At The Cross. Letter from a Region of My Mind". It provides a three-point dissection on "The Negro Problem", an expression not owned by Baldwin that he refers to while discussing the roots of racial tensions of his time and how to overcome them. (To know more about the use of and debate on this expression by Baldwin himself, please see: <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,830326,00.html> [2] and <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2934484.pdf> [3]).

In the first essay, Baldwin focuses on the central role of race in American history, and specifically addresses himself to his 14 year-old nephew who was confronted with anger and outrage. Through his nephew, Baldwin aims to address any Black young Afro-American.

In the second essay, Baldwin discusses relations between race and religion. He addresses Christianity with particular regard to its meaning for US society and to its use for the oppression of Black people.

A common thread to the whole book is Baldwin's call to both Whites and Blacks to use compassion, communication and mutual understanding to transcend tensions and overcome the legacy of racism.

James Baldwin was an iconic essayist, novelist, playwright and critic, who worked primarily about the Black American experience, racial tension, homosexuality and religion. He was active in the Civil Rights Movement, but spent his last years in the more congenial society of France.

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### Links

[1] <http://civilresistance.info/author/2304>

[2] <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,830326,00.html>

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