

ABRAHAM LINCOLN – OUR LEADER IN CRUCIAL DAYS

Abraham Lincoln led this nation through some of its most difficult days. The Christian faith of this man is debated among historians. President Lincoln never joined a church and to our knowledge never made a public profession of faith. In the early days of his political career he was accused of being an infidel. What is the evidence that this man had a genuine faith in God and led our nation in the strength and wisdom he received from the Lord?

I. MAJOR INFLUENCES IN LIFE. (Mark Knoll lists three major influences in his life).

A. Growing up in a Common Family.

1. Not primarily concerned with denominational debate, but with dealing with life.
2. Did not have access to vast libraries, but had access to and knew the Scripture.
 - * His speeches were peppered with quotations from Scripture. *

B. Disturbed by Infighting Among Denominations.

- * Stated that he would like to join a church that required nothing but a heartfelt love for God and fellow-man. The doctrinal debates of denominational life were not for him. *

C. Acquainted with Tragedy and Death.

1. Death of mother when he was nine.
2. Death of two sons in 1850 and 1862.
3. Death of close friends during early days of war.
4. Death of US soldiers as casualties mounted during Civil War.

The truly remarkable thing about Lincoln's religion was how these circumstances drove him to deeper contemplation of God and the divine will. The external Lincoln, casual about religious observance, hid a man of profound morality, an almost unbearable God-consciousness, and a deep belief in the freedom of God to transcend the limited vision of humanity. (Mark Knoll). This depth is revealed in his Second Inaugural Address.

II. HIS VIEWS ON RELIGION.

A. His Role as President. Rom. 13:4.

**"I believe I am an humble servant in the hands of our Heavenly Father;
I desire that all my words and acts may be according to His will." -- Abraham Lincoln**

B. The Bible.

**"In regards to this great Book (the Bible),
I have but to say it is the best gift God has given to man.
All the good the Saviour gave to the world was communicated through this Book.
But for it we could not know right from wrong.
All things most desirable for man's welfare, here and hereafter, are found portrayed in it." --
Abraham Lincoln**

C. Prayer.

1. Personal - "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go."

2. National – 2 Chronicles 7:14; Ps. 33:12.

Proclamation Appointing a National Fast Day

Washington, D.C.

March 30, 1863

By the President of the United States of America.

A Proclamation.

Whereas, the Senate of the United States, **devoutly recognizing the Supreme Authority and just Government of Almighty God, in all the affairs of men and of nations,** has, by a resolution, requested the President to designate and set apart a day for National prayer and humiliation.

And whereas it is the duty of nations as well as of men, to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions, in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon; and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord.

And, insomuch as we know that, by His divine law, nations like individuals are subjected to punishments and chastisements in this world, may we not justly fear that the awful calamity of civil war, which now desolates the land, may be but a punishment, inflicted upon us, for our presumptuous sins, to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole People? **We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power, as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us!**

It behooves us then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.

Now, therefore, in compliance with the request, and fully concurring in the views of the Senate, I do, by this my proclamation, designate and set apart Thursday, the 30th. day of April, 1863, as a day of national humiliation, fasting and prayer. And I do hereby request all the People to abstain, on that day, from their ordinary secular pursuits, and to unite, at their several places of public worship and their respective homes, in keeping the day holy to the Lord, and devoted to the humble discharge of the religious duties proper to that solemn occasion.

All this being done, in sincerity and truth, let us then rest humbly in the hope authorized by the Divine teachings, that the united cry of the Nation will be heard on high, and answered with blessings, no less than the pardon of our national sins, and the restoration of our now divided and suffering Country, to its former happy condition of unity and peace.

III. THE TESTIMONY OF MRS. LINCOLN.

As my husband was known to be the most loving and devoted husband & father we will allow these falsehoods a place where they deserve. We all — the whole world have been greatly shocked — at the fearful ideas — Herndon — has advanced regarding Mr. Lincoln's religious views. You, who knew him so well & held so many conversations with him, as far back as twenty years since, know what they were. A man, who never took the name of the Maker in vain, who always read his Bible diligently, who never failed to rely on God's promises & looked upon Him for protection, surely such a man as this, could not have been a disbeliever, or any other than what he was, a true Christian gentleman. No one, but such a man as Herndon could venture — to suggest such an idea. From the time of the death of our little Edward, I believe my husband's heart was directed towards religion & as time passed on - when Mr. Lincoln became elevated to Office - with the care of a great Nation, upon his shoulders - when devastating war was upon us then indeed to my knowledge - did his great heart go up daily, hourly, in prayer to God - for his sustaining power. When too - the overwhelming sorrow came upon us, our beautiful bright angelic boy, Willie was called away from us, to his Heavenly Home, with God's chastising hand upon us - he turned his heart to Christ

IV. THE TESTIMONY OF MR LINCOLN

He said this to Mr. Lincoln (Again, I commend him for his boldness): "Mr. President, do you love Jesus?" After a long pause, Mr. Lincoln solemnly replied: "When I left Springfield I asked the people to pray for me. I was not a Christian. When I buried my son, the severest trial of my life, I was not a Christian. But when I went to Gettysburg and saw the graves of thousands of our soldiers, I then and there consecrated myself to Christ. Yes, I do love Jesus." D. James Kennedy Sermon title: Was Lincoln a Christian?"

According to Kennedy, Lincoln was discussing a trip to Israel with his wife when he was shot by Booth.

Psalm 119:71