

Why Lincoln?

(reading notes and musings from "And There Was Light" - Meacham)

That's what a lot of younger People ask as they are unanimously outraged at the History of racism, pollution and intolerance. It seems that anything that is remotely unacceptable of today's more tolerant mind sets has been reportedly "cancelled"?

Why Lincoln then?

Why History?

Well. In my opinion. We talk about the story of Lincoln because his opponents are the same as today's opponents to Democracy.

When we look to another time in History, it allows us to see "The Forest from the trees", because we are all too close to the story of our current time, and people are so emotionally entrenched in their opinions.

The correlation is very simple, though the Autocratic forces of today try to label inclusion/tolerance as an "ism" to divide the Citizenry. The Abolitionists of Lincoln's time were called "Abolitionist Extremists", and just as in today's story, there was a popular base that did not believe that all Men and Women were created equal.

Lincoln grew up on a farm and was just naturally an Anti-Autocratic mindset.

He was outraged by the terror of slavery. He hated doing slave labor.

Thanks to his Step-Mother, who protected him from over working on the farm, he read as much as he wanted, and would stop reading when he decided to himself. (He had troubles on the farm, because his Father was tough to deal with, yet the Father listened to his Mother in Law eventually). Lincoln learned to enjoy telling stories and anecdotes at a young age. He was called to Leadership early in life...Yup. We have a Woman to thank for "Ol Abe" really. He had 1 year of school and was self taught. Loved the Bible. He liked the Principles of the Bible, not the common addictions to ritual and religiosity.

Though his debates that were published show that he was also speaking to an intolerant citizenry of his time, and his words could seem racist, we have to look at the core goodness in his fight against slavery. He stood his ground on the Union and against slavery. How will the Kids view voices of our time?

His opponents were sure that the institution of slavery would expand as it was, because it was a billion dollar business (trillion in today's dollars). It was all about the money, and the Autocracy was never going to give it up. Many people in Government thought that the "American Experiment" in Democracy would be over in the month of March after Lincoln was elected. The Democracy survived...

Lincoln gave very popular speeches championing Democracy and elevated to "political eminence" before he was nominated for President.

Regarding the Constitution, that according to Lincoln, was framed to prevent the spread of slavery. (Though we know about the "3/5ths a person" issue that cursed the Nation to this very day to create the Electoral College, Fugitive slave clause etc...) Lincoln believed that every present time should bring the light of their current experience...
...While recognizing the guarantees that the Constitution maintained. Basically, keep the good parts, and build from there. By the way, did you know our Beloved "Yes We Can" Prez was a Constitutional Law Professor for 10 years...And they questioned his knowledge of the subject? Anyway...onwards...

What's the good parts of the Constitution?

It's meant to protect from Tyranny/Autocracy.

How does Lincoln's time relate to our current challenges?

See if this sounds familiar...

To Lincoln, the confederate/pro-slavery argument was destructive and belligerent. The pro-slavery approach was not towards Democracy Spirit deliberation but to intentionally cause division and war. Through blindly repeating intolerant positions, asserting self righteous nativeism, and religious certitude citing scripture to defend slavery (Similar to Nativism of today)...confederate arguments were at odds with the growing widely held public opinion against autocratic institutions...confederate forces didn't like Democracy. The idea that Women and African Americans might vote was labeled as "Abolitionist extremism" (like today's labels of woke extremism, environmentalism or something like that). Women were expected to breed and be quiet. Wait a minute...what happened to Women's rights in 2023? Oh, Autocracy took Women's right away again...Uh oh. People should pay more attention to the Elections? The President chooses Supreme Court Judges...

As the Free Press grew in Lincoln's time and Citizens talked more about Freedom/Natural Rights, so did the reaction of autocratic forces and it's war against Freedom. The suppression of Freedom of Speech was waged in politics, religious pulpits and in the Free Press. Same as today's challenges. Pro slavery forces wanted to suppress all talk that said slavery was wrong. Just like today's attempts to rewrite history...it's the same story. Autocracy also tried to stop mail that was being sent by Abolitionists. Remember when the Post Office boxes were being removed before the 2020 election? Nothing is new under the sun.

What was the Constitution idea basically?

First it creates a National government consisting of a legislative, an executive, and a judicial branch, with a system of checks and balances among the three branches. Second, it divides power between the Federal government and the states. And third, it protects various individual liberties of American citizens.

...continuing with the conversation about Historical moral truth and reciprocities...

Let's look at Lincoln's time for correlations that might shed light on our current situation...

Just as Lincoln was against slavery and supported his arguments with theology, history, and intelligence, the opposite was the story in the South. Lincoln's ideas were based on the "Declaration principle" of Liberty for All. The same idea that inspired the independence from Britain. He believed, that without a promise of something better, then Freedom from Britain would not have been possible. In opposition to the Crittenden Compromise to expand slavery, he said: "We have just carried an election on principles fairly stated to the people...Prevent, as far as possible, any of our friends from demoralizing themselves, and our cause, by entertaining propositions for compromise of any sort, on slavery extension."

Lincoln was a very popular figure and won over 50% of votes in the North, yet 2% in the South. He wasn't even on the ballot in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas. There were threats of insurrection and assassination. With Lincoln's election, 2 U.S. Senators resigned, because his presence meant the end of slavery...he saw it as slowly ending by surrounding it, not an abrupt end.

The previous President Buchanan had thought the country should prepare for slavery to expand, and in contrast, Lincoln advised no compromise with Slavery. Lincoln believed that maintaining the Union was essential.

States seceded: South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, and Louisiana.

Secession was a fact and insurrection was a fear.

Lincoln read President Jackson's proclamation letter that he wrote in 1832. Even though Jackson was a slave owner he believed in the Union.

"Disunion by armed forces is TREASON". He said that the ballot box, courts, and process of amendment were the proper avenues of reform. Not the "**Mad project of disunion**".

The Governor of Virginia, Henry Wise was said to be raising a twenty five thousand man army to march on the capital, meant to prevent the counting of Electoral College votes. (Sounds like January 6th stuff). A General in the U.S Army, Winfield Scott deployed Federal Troops throughout the capital. 100 plain clothes officers accompanied the path from the Senate to the House. The votes were counted.

Also...regarding legislative attempts to expand slavery...Kentucky Senator Crittenden wanted amendments to protect slavery. The amendments would open Cuba, Mexico and Latin America to slavery. The idea was very popular. Around 250,000 people signed on to it. In January 1861, the Senate declined the proposals. There was a bid asking the 4 surviving Presidents to help solve disputes. (Van Buren, Tyler, Fillmore, and Pierce).

Lincoln was sworn in as President.