

Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, 1865

Summary

During his Second Inaugural Address, Lincoln voices his thoughts on the ongoing Civil War and the effect it's having on the Union. He makes it clear that no one involved wanted war and attempts at negotiations were made with no success. He mentions his view of the war as a punishment by God due to the many years of slavery leading to the war. He believed the war wouldn't end until God makes it clear that enough punishment was taken by both sides, but he was also hopeful that by the end of it all, all sides would've at peace as one.

Questions

- Lincoln mentions both sides dreading the idea of the war, do you believe there was any way to prevent the war if negotiations continued?
- If the South would've won the war, how long do you believe it would've taken for slavery to end, if ever?
- Based on Lincoln's statements, we know the South's main cause for war was keeping slavery, but was the North more concerned about keeping the Union or abolishing slavery?