

It is Not Too Late for Jesus to Be Your Lord and Savior

Abraham Lincoln grew up in a highly religious home. His parents were members of a small Baptist church in their hometown. While Abraham Lincoln was labeled a skeptic at times in his life, he was known to be able to quote "chapter and verse" of the Bible. He *knew* about Jesus, but some people questioned whether Jesus was his Lord and Savior. He and his family attended New York Avenue Presbyterian Church during his years in the White House. These were difficult times for our country as the nation was navigating a very divisive Civil War. Lincoln wanted to preserve the Union, but his army suffered repeated defeats in battles in 1861, 1862, and early 1863. At the same time, Lincoln's 11-year-old son, Willie, died of typhoid fever (February 20, 1862). Willie had planned to become a minister.¹ Unable to function as President of the United States, Lincoln isolated himself in his office and wept all day. Lincoln told several people that his feelings about religion changed at this time. Following his son's death, Lincoln is known to have dedicated the first hour of each day to solitude, reading scripture, and praying. Lincoln was particularly moved when he visited the Gettysburg battlefield (July 1863).



Gettysburg had more than 50,000 fatalities, the deadliest battle in the war. Lincoln said, "When I left home to take this chair of State, I requested my countrymen to pray for me; I was not then a Christian. When my son died, the severest trial of my life, I was not then a Christian. But when I went to Gettysburg, and looked upon the graves of our dead heroes, who had fallen in defense of their country, I then and there consecrated myself to Christ. Yes, indeed, I do love Jesus."² Lincoln had seen the need for salvation firsthand.

In 1864, some former slaves in Maryland presented Lincoln with a gift of a Bible. According to one report, Lincoln replied: "In regard to this great book, I have but to say, it is the best gift God has given to man. All the good the Savior 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 to be found portrayed in it."³

Shortly before his assassination, Lincoln decided to officially join the church he had been attending, including signing a profession of faith. "Lincoln had always made reference to God and respected providence, but it was not until he personally made a decision to consecrate himself to Christ that peace flooded his heart and mind."⁴ Moments before Lincoln was assassinated, he reportedly told his wife at Ford's Theatre that he wanted to visit the Holy Land and that "there was no place he so much desired to see as Jerusalem."⁵ Lincoln was at peace and his destination was assured.

What does this tell us? Coming to true faith can be a work in progress and may happen over time. Like Lincoln, we can live a life of wholesome values and do good things. It is not enough to "respect" Jesus and merely sit in the pews at church. None of these is enough by themselves. We need to accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. It may take life experiences to help bring us to that decision. It is not too late for us today.

Question: Many of us know *about* Jesus, but do we truly *know* Him? How about you?

The Bible Says: *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:6).*

¹ "Religious Views of Abraham Lincoln," Wikipedia.org online post

² Battlefields & Blessings, by Terry Tully, page 318.

³ Wikipedia.org

⁴ Battlefields & Blessings, page 318

⁵ Wikipedia.org