

CONSIDER THE SOURCE

THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS, NOVEMBER 19, 1863

Lincoln gave this speech on the occasion of the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, four months after the famous battle.

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate—we can not consecrate—we can not hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought

here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

UNDERSTAND, ANALYZE, & EVALUATE

1. What purpose did Lincoln ascribe to the Civil War in the first two sentences of his speech?
2. Why did Lincoln state that he and his audience could not dedicate the battlefield?
3. What significance did Lincoln ascribe to the Battle of Gettysburg in the last sentence of this speech?
4. Why do you think this address endeared President Lincoln to many of his contemporaries and so many Americans since?

Source: Michael P. Johnson (ed.), *Abraham Lincoln, Slavery, and the Civil War: Selected Writings and Speeches* (Boston: Bedford St. Martin's, 2010), p. 263.

A day later, he ordered a second, larger effort. In what is remembered as Pickett's Charge, a force of 15,000 Confederate soldiers advanced for almost a mile across open country while being swept by Union fire. Only about 5,000 made it up the ridge, and this remnant finally had to surrender or retreat. By now, Lee had lost nearly a third of his army. On **Gettysburg** July 4, the same day as the surrender of Vicksburg, Lee withdrew from Gettysburg. The retreat was another major turning point in the war. Never again were the weakened Confederate forces able seriously to threaten Northern territory. Months later Lincoln visited the battlefield site and delivered one of the most famous speeches in American history. (See "Consider the Source: The Gettysburg Address.")

Before the end of the year, there was one more important turning point, this time in Tennessee. After occupying Chattanooga on September 9, Union forces under General