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English X

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### Inaugural Divided Address

In 1776 the United States declared itself free of England's injustice; however, the first fifteen presidents took no action against the subjugation within the country they were building. When Abraham Lincoln took office his purpose was not to abolish slavery but to uphold the morals the country was built on. He did so by apportioning the, "Declaration of Independence," throughout his, "House Divided," "Gettysburg Address" and "Second Inaugural," speeches in order to classify slavery as a wedge in the nation.

"House Divided," a speech by Abraham Lincoln focuses on the morality behind slavery. From the Declaration of Independence he takes the ideas of, "sacred right of self-government," and decrees that technicalities behind this thinking is what has been used to classify slavery as just (House Divided 3). The Declaration uses self-government as a way to free itself from England, however, the South had distorted this idea to represent, "That if any one man choose to enslave another, no third man shall be allowed to object" (House Divided 3). President Lincoln went on to discredit this statement falsely supported by the Declaration with the explication that it was created to distance America from the enslavement of Britain's monarchy, not capture them for personal gain. He does so by alluding to the Dred Scott case and the Nebraska Bill (House Divided 4).

In 1863 Abraham Lincoln delivered, "The Gettysburg Address," with the intention of

igniting pride in the men of the Union fighting against slavery. He does so with the famous statement, “Fourscore and seven years ago our father brought forth, on this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal” (Gettysburg Address 1). President Lincoln refers to the documents that the nation was built on, starting with the, “Declaration of Independence;” which he quotes, “...all men are created equal.” The Declaration was created with liberty in mind because England was conquering America with the idea of superiority, though to prove the colonies were equal to England they formed their own independent thriving nation. It is clear that his statement is classifying slavery, with the indication of it’s iniquity, as a threat against equality; going against the basis of the whole country.

When Abraham Lincoln began his second term the Civil War was starting to be fought for freedom; he gave the, “Second Inaugural,” a speech that furthers his theme attacking slavery with allusions to the, “Declaration of Independence.” He again starts his campaign by narrowing the differences of White to African Americans with his statement, “Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other” (Second Inaugural 5). This not only appeals to the equality between the two races but brings religion into the contention. It is taken from the Declaration’s preamble, “...the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.” This quote is referring to the natural rights endowed by the one and only God. President Lincoln uses this allusion to reveal that if God gives everyone natural rights such as liberty, and there is only one God, than He must be creating all people, not only Caucasians, to live with autonomy.

Throughout Abraham Lincoln’s life he gave many speeches, most short and with a humorous twist; but all with a meaning. In President Lincoln’s speeches, “House Divided,” “Gettysburg Address,”

and “Second Inaugural,” he breaks down the meanings in the “Declaration of Independence,” as indication of slavery as a classified fraud. His speeches did not halt the secession but they did challenge the morals of the United States. If every American had taken the time to understand the revelations President Lincoln was making in the 1860’s the many casualties of the Civil War might have been avoided.

Works Cited

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