

## **The First Thanksgiving: March 1863: President Lincoln's Proclamation Appointing A National Fast Day**

On The 30th of March, 1863 President Abraham Lincoln, signed a resolution proclaiming Thursday, the 30th of April ,1863 as a day of National humiliation, fasting and prayer. He requested that all people abstain on that day from their ordinary secular pursuits, and to unite, at their several places of worship and their respective homes, on keeping the day holy to the lord, and devoted to the humble discharge of the religious duties proper to that solemn occasion. Lincoln went on to tell that we needed the blessings for the pardon of our National Sins (Slavery, War, etc.?) to help us restore our divided and suffering country to its former happy condition of unity and peace. As we approach many important dates for this year (2013) we can look to President Lincoln's message and Leadership and gather both inspiration and paths of action to apply to our own lives and times. His Resolution also mentioned the Following, which I think is worth Quoting and remembering for all Americans in the world we live in. "We have been the recipients of The choicest bounties of Heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has ever grown". This is also true even down to our present day, 2013. We can though, sometimes forget the Blessings we have by not thinking about them as often as we should.

The Resolution goes on to say That we have forgotten God! Can you imagine a President, or (Congress for that matter) making any kind of these statements or A RESOLUTION of this kind Today? A resolution of Thanksgiving in the sense that our Government of 1863 made? I say I wish it could, but I doubt it has the Character or the Moral Courage to publicly proclaim these things. Let me be clear, I do believe we have Individuals that are resolute and could be up to this task, but I think our atmosphere of "Political Correctness" might take issue with these statements. The Great Lesson of President Lincoln's Proclamation can be looked at in several ways. First, he puts forth the idea that there is a higher power to whom we all answer to (including himself). Second, It reaches out to everyone, all peoples, that we are all Americans working together. It shows , that despite our difficulties, we can have hope and to take courage for the future and we must recognize our blessings and our shortcomings, but to work for unification and peace. Third, It teaches us that even during the great Trial of Our National Calamity, The people had a goal, it had a purpose that was attainable, and possible to keep: That the "Government of The People, by The People, For The People shall not perish from the Earth".

President Abraham Lincoln once was asked if God was on our side (The Union). He Replied I rather hope we are on God's side indicating that what was RIGHT is MIGHT. As The War came down to its conclusion, The message he told many around him was "Do good to those who hate you and turn their ill will to friendship". This is how he wanted the Nation to go into the future, move forward, not backward and become a Nation again. His message is still with us today. I conclude with a quotation from his first inaugural. " Why should there not be a patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people? Is there any better or equal hope in the world?"

I think not, and let us always remember this as we bless our people and our country.