

The Attackers: The Lord's Emancipation Proclamation: Lincoln, 1863 cf. Jesus, A.D. 32, John 8:31-32; The Divine Decree: 5 Characteristics; the Believer's Purpose in the Decree, Eph 2:10

## The Lord's Emancipation Proclamation:

1. Much has been made over Abraham Lincoln's proclamation issued on January 1, 1863, but few are aware of what it actually meant. Here's an excerpt that sums it up in a nutshell:

On the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State ... shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.

I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as Commander-in-Chief, of the Army and Navy of the United States in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do, on this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three ... order and designate ... the following, to wit:

Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, (except the Parishes of St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Jefferson, St. John, St. Charles, St. James Ascension, Assumption, Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. Mary, St. Martin, and Orleans, including the City of New Orleans) Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia, (except the forty-eight counties designated as West Virginia, and also the counties of Berkley, Accomac, Northampton, Elizabeth City, York, Princess Ann, and Norfolk, including the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth[]), and which excepted parts, are for the present, left precisely as if this proclamation were not issued.

And by virtue of the power, and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States, and parts of States, are, and henceforward shall be free.

And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution, upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind, and the gracious favor of Almighty God.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

By the President: ABRAHAM LINCOLN  
WILLIAM H. SEWARD, Secretary of State.<sup>1</sup>

2. Lincoln wrote a public letter to *New York Tribune* editor Horace Greely in 1862 in which he stated that his “paramount objective in this struggle is to save the Union ... What I do about slavery, and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union.”<sup>2</sup>
3. The Proclamation did not free a single slave which is exactly what Lincoln intended. A quick analysis from these excerpts tells us why:

The Emancipation proclamation applied only to *rebel* territory, even though at the time Federal armies occupied large parts of the South, including much of Tennessee and Virginia, where it would have been possible to emancipate thousands of slaves. Specifically exempted by name in the Proclamation were the federally occupied states of Maryland and Kentucky, as well as West Virginia and many counties of Virginia. The Federal army also occupied much of Louisiana at the time, and those areas were exempted as well. Lincoln, one of the nation’s preeminent lawyers, was careful to craft the proclamation in a way that would guarantee that it would not emancipate any slaves. (pp. 35–36)

The Emancipation Proclamation was immediately excoriated throughout the North (and much of the world) as a political gimmick. The *New York World* newspaper [7 January 1863] sarcastically editorialized that:

The President has purposely made the proclamation inoperative in all places where we have gained a military footing which makes the slaves accessible. He has proclaimed emancipation only where he has notoriously no power to execute it. The exemption of the accessible parts of Louisiana, Tennessee, and Virginia renders the proclamation not merely futile, but ridiculous.

Lincoln’s own secretary of state, William Seward, mocked the Emancipation Proclamation by saying, “We show our sympathy with slavery by emancipating slaves where we cannot reach them and holding them in bondage where we can set them free.”<sup>3</sup> (p. 36)

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. National Archives & Records Administration, 700 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20408. [http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured\\_documents/emancipation\\_proclamation/transcript.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured_documents/emancipation_proclamation/transcript.html). (Accessed February 10, 2012.)

<sup>2</sup> Robert W. Johannsen, *Lincoln, the South, and Slavery: The Political Dimension* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1991), 14.

<sup>3</sup> Murray N. Rothbard, *The Logic of Action II* (Cheltenham, England: Edward Elgar, 1997), 43.

The *London Spectator* succinctly observed that “The principle [of the Proclamation] is not that a human being cannot justly own another, but that he cannot own him unless he is loyal to the United States.”<sup>4</sup> (pp. 36–37)

The British writer Earl Russell noted that ... “There seems to be no declaration of a principle adverse to slavery in this proclamation.”<sup>5</sup>

Lincoln himself maintained that the Proclamation was merely a war measure, not an attempt at genuine emancipation. In a letter to his Treasury Secretary Salmon P. Chase, he admitted that the original proclamation had no legal justification, except as a military measure.<sup>6</sup> He apparently knew that it was unconstitutional as well, for he insisted on calling it a “war measure.” In reality, the president at the time had no power to dictate such a thing to a state government. Today, of course, presidents routinely dictate thousands of laws and regulations and executive orders that state and local governments must comply with. It was Lincoln who let the genie out of the bottle with regard to the transformation of the states into mere subsidiaries of the federal government.

If the Emancipation Proclamation was a “war measure,” what might have been its objectives as such? Most likely, Lincoln understood that the European powers, who had recently abolished slavery *peacefully*, would balk at trading with and otherwise supporting the Confederacy if he introduced emancipation as one purpose of the war.<sup>7</sup> (p. 37)

4. Our Lord’s emancipation proclamation is far more succinct and way more liberating: Any believer who continues in His Word will know the truth and that truth shall make him free.

**John 8:31** - “Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed in Him, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;

**John 8:32** - and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” (NASB)

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<sup>4</sup> Edgar Lee Masters, *Lincoln the Man* (Columbia, S.C.: Foundation for American Education, 1997), 27.

<sup>5</sup> Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1776/1981).

<sup>6</sup> James McPherson, *Abraham Lincoln and the Second American Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 40.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas J. DiLorenzo, *The Real Lincoln: A New Look at Abraham Lincoln, His Agenda, and an Unnecessary War* (Roseville, CA: Forum, 2002),

3. Abraham Lincoln didn't free the slaves yet many of those slaves were already free for they had been evangelized by their owners, many responded to the Word, and grew in grace.
4. True slavery is in the soul and once set free through faith in Christ that person is placed in service to Him.
5. The divine decree is an extremely important doctrine to understand regarding this:

**The decree of God is His eternal, holy, wise, and sovereign purpose, comprehending simultaneously all things that ever were or will be in their causes, conditions, successions, and relations, and determining their certain futuration.**

6. The emphasis in this definition is that in eternity past God knew everything that would take place during the course of human history – every thought, decision, and action of every individual.
7. The details of His knowledge and plan are so refined that He knows the fall of a sparrow (Matthew 10:29) and the number of hairs on our heads (Matthew 10:30).
8. There are five characteristics to the decree:
  - (1) **All-comprehensive.** Not the slightest uncertainty could exist as to one of the smallest or most insignificant events without confusion to all. Everything in life is a chain of causes and effects.<sup>8</sup>
  - (2) **Eternal.** What God knows He has always known simultaneously whatever was or will be in their causes, conditions, successions, and relations.

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<sup>8</sup> The “Butterfly Effect” is a popular principle in chaos theory which states that in any dynamic system, small initial differences may, over time, lead to large unforeseen consequences.

- (3) **Perfect.** The content of the decree includes sin, failure, and wrongdoing, but these are the results of angelic and human free will. God comprehends everything that would ever occur within both civilizations.
  - (4) **Unchangeable and certain.** God is never caught by surprise. His knowledge is so all-encompassing that nothing can ever happen that would cause Him to alter, change, or adjust the decree.
  - (5) **Divine choice.** In eternity past the decree was decided by God from His own free will. His plan is set and He is bound by His veracity, faithfulness and immutability to complete what He has begun. God created the angelic and human civilizations with equal free will to choose for or against Him.
9. The divine decree includes His eternal purpose regarding each believer according to His wisdom and sovereign will for the purpose of His glory.

**Ephesians 2:10** - For we are His product [ **new spiritual species** ], having been created in Christ Jesus [ **positional truth** ] for the purpose of good achievements [ **application of doctrine inside the divine dynasphere** ] which God has prepared in advance [ **decreed in eternity past** ], that we should walk [ **wheel-tracks of righteousness** ] by means of them.

10. PRINCIPLE: God is not surprised by anything that occurs in your life. It was decreed in eternity past.
11. You may consider that you are a free agent and free to make your own decisions. However, those decisions are not always good ones. Further, these poor decisions have created problems in your life and those of others. They have limited some your options while eliminating the others.

12. PRINCIPLE: In human history, the sovereignty of God and the free will of man must coexist by divine decree.
13. The law of volitional responsibility is the message of this principle. God recognizes our sins and failures and they are each decreed. His plan also includes ramifications for those decisions and these are also decreed.