

## American Minute with Bill Federer

### Battle of Gettysburg: Turning Point in Civil War

"I ... invoke the influence of His Holy Spirit to subdue the anger" -Lincoln

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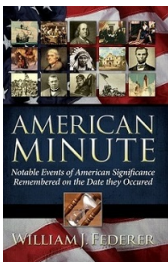
Washington, D.C., was in a panic!

72,000 Confederate troops were just sixty miles away near **Gettysburg**, Pennsylvania ...

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What led up to this Battle?

Two months before, at the **Battle of Chancellorsville**, Confederate General **Stonewall Jackson** was mistakenly shot by his own men on May 2, 1863, and died shortly thereafter.

Though **Confederates** won the **Battle of Chancellorsville**, the **loss of Jackson** was devastating, as most historians speculate that had **Jackson** been at

**Gettysburg** two month later, the **South** may have won.

**Robert E. Lee** was now under a time deadline.

Mounting casualties of the war were causing **Lincoln's** popularity to fall, so if **Lee** could get a quick victory at **Gettysburg**, he could pressure **Lincoln** to a truce.

But this window of opportunity was fast closing, as **Union Gen. Ulysses S. Grant** was about to capture **Vicksburg** on the Mississippi, which would **divide the Confederacy** and free up thousands of **Union troops** to fight **Lee** in the east.

On the Union side, **Lincoln** replaced Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker with **Maj. Gen. George Meade** to command the 94,000 men of the **Union Army of the Potomac**.

**The Battle of Gettysburg** began July 1, 1863.

The **Confederate army** was at a **disadvantage** as its **cavalry** was **not present** the first two days of the battle.

**Confederate J.E.B. Stuart** and **5,000 mounted soldiers** were supposed to **attack** the Union rear and **quickly return**, but they were **caught up fighting** the **Union cavalry** led by **George Armstrong Custer**.

After **two days of intense combat**, with ammunition running low, **General Robert E. Lee** ordered a **direct attack**.

**Confederate General James Longstreet** disagreed with **Lee's plan** resulting in his **delayed advance** till after all the **Confederate artillery** had been spent, leaving no cover fire.

Historians speculate that if **General Longstreet** had made a timely attack, the **Confederates** may have won the day.

As it happened, 12,500 **Confederate soldiers** marched across a mile of open field **without artillery cover** to make "**Pickett's Charge**" directly into the **Union position** at Cemetery Ridge.

An hour of murderous fire and bloody **hand-to-hand combat** ensued, followed by the **Confederates** barely being pushed back.

The **Battle of Gettysburg** ended JULY 3, 1863, with over **50,000 casualties**.

The next day, **Vicksburg** surrendered to **General Grant**, giving the **Union Army** control of the **Mississippi River**.

When news reached **London**, all hopes of Europe recognizing the **Confederacy** were **lost**.

For the next two years, the **South** was on the **defensive**.

On July 5, 1863, **President Lincoln** and his son, Tad, visited **General Daniel E. Sickles**, who had his leg blown off at **Gettysburg**.

**General James F. Rusling** recorded that **General Sickles** asked **Lincoln** if he was anxious before the Battle.

**Lincoln** answered:

"No, I was not; some of my Cabinet and many others in Washington were, but I had no fears ..."

**Lincoln** continued:

"In the pinch of your campaign up there, when everybody seemed panic-stricken, and nobody could tell what was going to happen, oppressed by the gravity of our affairs, I went to my room one day,

and I locked the door, and **got down on my knees before Almighty God, and prayed** to Him mightily for victory at **Gettysburg**.

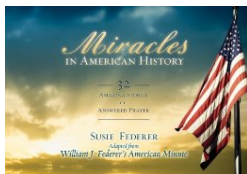
I told Him that this was His war, and our cause His cause, but we couldn't stand another **Fredericksburg** or **Chancellorsville**.

And I then and there made a solemn vow to **Almighty God**, that if He would stand by our boys at **Gettysburg**, I would stand by **Him ...**"

**Lincoln** added:

"And He did stand by you boys, and I will stand by Him.

And after that (I don't know how it was, and I can't explain it), soon a sweet comfort crept into my soul that **God Almighty** had taken the whole business into his own hands and that things would go all right at **Gettysburg**."



### [Miracles in American History](#)

Twelve days after the **Battle of Gettysburg**, July 15, 1863, **Lincoln** proclaimed a **Day of Prayer**:

"It is meet and right to recognize and confess the presence of the **Almighty Father** and the power of His hand equally in these triumphs and in these sorrows ...

I invite the people of the United States to ... render the homage due to the **Divine Majesty** for the wonderful things He has done in the nation's behalf and **invoke** the influence of **His Holy Spirit** to **subdue the anger** which has produced and so long sustained a needless and cruel rebellion."

In his **Gettysburg Address**, November 19, 1863,

**Abraham Lincoln** ended:

"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."

Years later at the **Gettysburg Battlefield**, **President Franklin D. Roosevelt** stated May 30, 1934:

"On these hills of **Gettysburg** two brave armies of Americans once met in contest ...

Since those days, two subsequent wars, both with foreign Nations, have measurably ... softened the ancient passions.

It has been left to us of this generation to see the healing made permanent."

**Roosevelt** stated, September 17, 1937:

"I came into the world 17 years after the close of the **war between the States** ... Today ... there are still many among us who can remember it ...

It serves us little to discuss again the rights and the wrongs of the long 4-years' war ... We can but wish that the war had never been. We can and we do revere the memory of the brave men who fought on both sides ...

But we know today that it was best ... for the generations of Americans who have come after them, that the conflict did not end in a division of our land into two nations.

I like to think that it was the **will of God** that we remain **one people.**"

At the **Confederate Memorial** in Arlington Cemetery, **President Coolidge** said, May 25, 1924:

"It was **Lincoln** who pointed out that both sides prayed to the same **God**. When that is the case, it is only a matter of time when each will seek a common end.

We can now see clearly what that end is. It is the maintenance of **our American ideals, beneath a common flag, under the blessings of Almighty God.**"

In his 3rd Inaugural Address, **President Franklin D. Roosevelt** said, January 20, 1941:

"The **spirit of America** ... is the product of centuries ... born in the multitudes of those who came from many lands ...

The democratic aspiration is no mere recent phase in human history. It is human history ...

... Its vitality was written into our own **Mayflower Compact**, into the **Declaration of Independence**, into the **Constitution of the United States**, into the **Gettysburg Address** ...

If the **spirit of America** were killed, even though the Nation's body ... lived on, the America we know would have perished."

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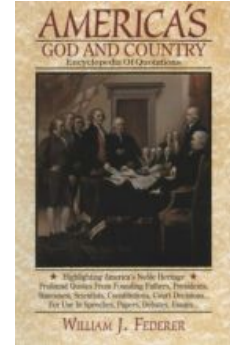
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