

DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTIONS

LINCOLN'S SECOND INAUGURAL

When Abraham Lincoln began his second term on March 4, 1865, the Civil War was about to end. The four years of conflict had been far longer and bloodier than anyone on either side had expected.

In his Second Inaugural Address, Lincoln argued that the war had been necessary to preserve the Union. The bloodshed, he suggested, was God's pun-

ishment of the nation for the sin of slavery. Yet he did not call for revenge on the defeated Confederates. Instead, he urged Americans to work "with malice toward none, with charity for all" to achieve "a just and lasting peace."

Read this excerpt from Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address. Then answer the questions that follow.

Words to Know

- **deprecate:** disapprove or denounce
- **impending:** about to happen
- **invoke:** call upon a higher power

On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed to an **impending** civil war. All dreaded it; all sought to avert it. . . . Both parties **deprecate** war, but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive, and the other would accept war rather than let it perish, and the war came. . . .

Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each **invokes** His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces, but let us judge not, that we be not judged.

QUESTIONS

- Which side did Lincoln think was the aggressor in the war? Why? _____

- What was he referring to when he spoke about men "wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces"? Explain what he meant. _____

- What common ground did Lincoln see between the two sides? _____

- What did he think was odd about this? _____

- What line in this excerpt indicates that Lincoln would be willing to forgive the Confederates? How might that practice have helped heal the nation sooner after a bitter war? _____

