

'The Right Place, right trial, right time!'

Robert Todd Lincoln is well known as the eldest son of the 16th President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln. Robert Todd outlived both of his parents living to the age of 82 with his passing in 1926. A veteran of the Civil War having served as a Captain (Union Army), shortly after his father's death he became involved in the political sphere. Some of his most notable political appointments were United States Minister to the UK (1889-1893), and United States Secretary of War (1881-1885), as well as being a successful lawyer and businessman.

The identity crisis that Robert Todd Lincoln dealt with most of his life, was that his political enemies would accuse him of reaching high positions in politics due to being 'The President's Son', instead of being Robert Todd. The intellectual and resourceful man who sought to make his country better. Up until his death in 1926, he wrote to friends that he struggled with this his entire life. What's so interesting is that those who knew both Robert Todd and his father, said that they two were polar opposites. While President Lincoln was said to be humorous and witty, Robert Todd was described as 'cold, stuffy, and aloof'. Robert Todd Lincoln was also the longest surviving member of the surrender of Robert E. Lee at Appomattox. Lincoln was also the last surviving member of the Garfield and Arthur Administrations.

What many consider 'tragic' about Robert Todd Lincoln is that he experienced the horror of history three separate times. Robert Todd was the first person retrieved when his father had been shot, and was with him at his bedside when he passed. Robert Todd was with President James A. Garfield on the day that he was shot at a railroad station in Washington, D.C. Robert Todd Lincoln was also with President William McKinley when he was assassinated just 20 years later.

Robert Todd Lincoln is the only known person to have been present or closely associated with the assassination of three American Presidents. What an odd and lonely category to be in. Many historians look at these circumstances and say that he (Robert Todd) was at the wrong place at the wrong time. Respectfully, I disagree. It is believed that Robert Todd Lincoln was a Christian. He professed faith in Christ and was a part of the Presbyterian Church. He also served in lay leadership roles at the Presbyterian Church he attended while living in Chicago in the early 1880s. As a Christian, I believe that God allowed Robert Todd to be closely associated with all three of these Presidential assassinations for a specific reason and purpose. When it comes to the Sovereignty of God, I do not believe there is any such thing as 'right place at the wrong time'. Perhaps God allowed His servant, Robert Todd, to go through these similar and sinister events three different times to provide stability and peace amidst tragedy for a shaky nation. In all of these assassinations, the country was still reeling from the dividing and divisive effects of the civil war. Those in government needed a man like Robert Todd, who had been there and done that, and could let everyone know, we've been through this before and made it through, we can do it again. I don't know this for sure, but what I do know, is that God does not allow anything to

happen on accident. We won't know until we arrive in Heaven the impact of Robert Todd Lincoln due to the horrible experiences he had in his career. But, even in these times, God is preparing us for the next opportunity to share His light and help others. For Robert Todd, I truly believe it was to provide a familiar name, stability, and assurance for a hurting nation.

So, no matter how many 'times' you've faced the same trial, and you keep asking God 'this again, really?'. I encourage you to trust His plan, lean into His plan, and look to help others with the dark and deep valleys that the Lord has led you through to help others. The trials you face in your life are not 'the right place at the wrong time'. If you're a believer, it's the right place, the right trial, all according to His time.

-Rev. R. Brady Henderson

