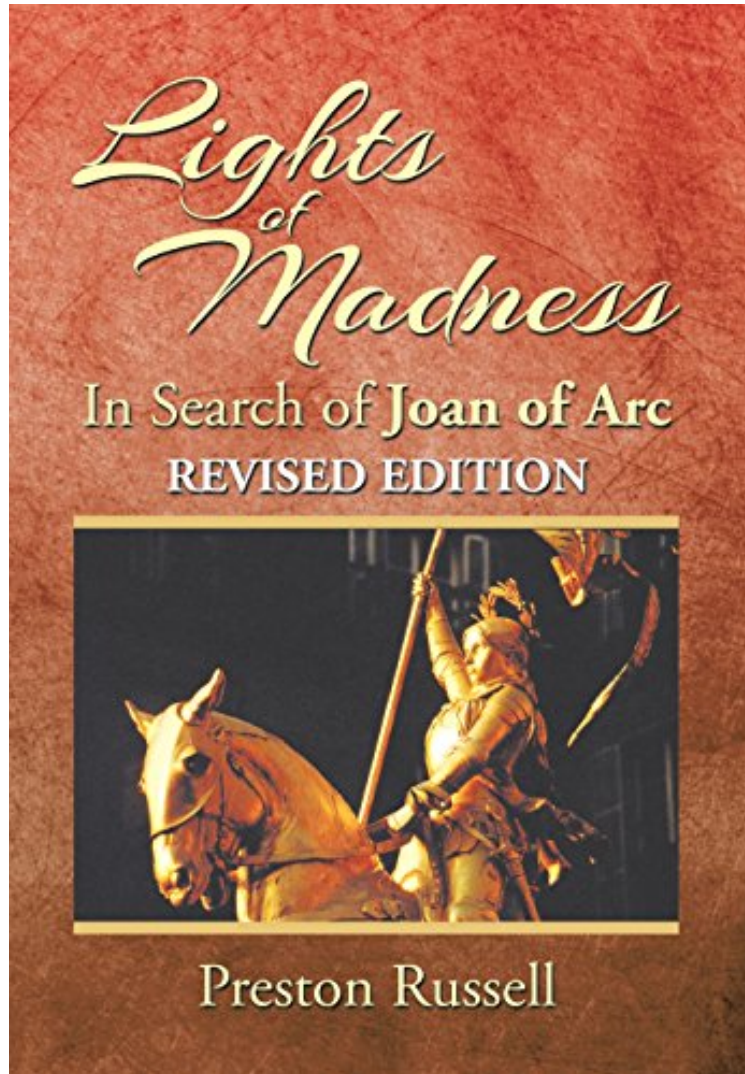


[Ebook pdf] Lights of Madness: In Search of Joan of Arc

## Lights of Madness: In Search of Joan of Arc

*Preston Russell*

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**Preston Russell : Lights of Madness: In Search of Joan of Arc** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Lights of Madness: In Search of Joan of Arc:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great lit review and approach of a fascinating historical figureBy ebienicAs fascinating historical figures go, Joan of Arc ranks up there among the most inscrutable and the most tragic. Convinced that she was hearing the voice of God and a few saints, Joan of Arc took off to take back France from the English, and reinstate Charles VII to the throne. While she enjoyed early success, and even had the British on the run, she was eventually captured at Compeigne and burned at the stake in 1431 after a lengthy and far from fair trial. Eventually, Charles VII was successfully reinstated, he initiated a trial of reclamation to clear her verdict of heresy,

and centuries later Joan was declared a saint in the Catholic Church. Joan of Arc has been examined from many different perspectives and milieus. She has been the subject of theater, feminist essays, religious festivals, and medical models. Author Preston Russell begins with a blow-by-blow of her trial, and delves a little deeper into her religious motivations (which given the times were also intertwined with her political motivations) and continues with a literature review of her evolving persona and concludes with some medical theories regarding her mental health state, particularly captivating to the author as he is himself a physician. Like everyone else, a medieval teenage girl leading armies because of voices in her head fascinates me. The fact that there is no Joan of Arc disorder or real medical explanation further bolsters her religious acumen, and I enjoy pundits trying to explain the unexplainable. I found *Lights of Madness* to be a really thorough and well researched book, and I loved the references to the source material. That being said, it read more like a thesis than a book, and I think it could benefit from some reorganization, or at least clearer sections and author interjections. In fact, I think that rather than just an introduction from the author on how he discovered and was enthralled with the subject, the book would benefit from his description of exactly how he went about finding everything in each section - religious, medical, literature, etc. I know its scientifically trendy to pretend to be objective, but everyone comes from somewhere and has reasons to be pulled toward different subjects, and, for me, that helps my own evaluation and conclusions. The authors personal story is just as important as Joans, and just as it was critical to describe how Shaw and Shakespeare treated her story differently, he needs to add his to the pile. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Should Joan of Arc Be Given A Diagnosis? By L. Frankel This book includes an account of Joan of Arcs life mainly relying on the transcripts of her trial. There are numerous endnotes. I have no complaints about Russells accuracy, but it would have been enormously convenient for readers if these notes had been hyperlinked within the text in the electronic version. I have seen this user friendly feature in textbooks. I think it should be standard in any digitized book that has endnotes or a glossary. There is also a section dealing with portrayals of Joan of Arc since her death, but the aspect of this biographical study that I found most useful was Russells discussion of all the attempts to diagnose Joan of Arc. As a physician, his views on this topic seemed authoritative. I also very much appreciated Russells perspective on the the medicalization of spiritual figures. Those who search for an appropriate diagnosis for this particular saint definitely need to read the trial transcripts thoroughly as Preston Russell has evidently done. The cover and internal illustrations enhance the experience of reading *Lights of Madness*, so that it seems less dry and academic. Although there were a handful of typographical errors, I found the book very readable. I would recommend it to any reader who wants an in depth exploration of Joan of Arcs life and a thoughtful evaluation of her psychology based on the extensive evidence available. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Brilliant! I don't know how all this enormous research ... By Jack C. Wray Brilliant! I don't know how all this enormous research could have been done in only 10 years. What a masterful way of drawing on such experts in all fields to get to the real Joan of Ark.

Joan of Arc's legend has been embraced by diverse worldly ideologies, all competing for her meaning---icon, lunatic, early feminist, possibly a man? In this book Joan of Arc's trials and imagery are traced through the centuries, leading to modern scientific research to explain what is considered, or dismissed, as miraculous. Preston Russell examines the three trials of Joan; Joan's transformation in history and literature; and, as a physician, the evolution of insanity from antiquity to current brain research, presently probing the origins of consciousness to higher sources---opening up avenues that a few decades ago would have been dismissed as scientific madness. Does God speak to individuals directly? Are some human beings born with such a keen intuitive power that they can communicate with supernatural beings? Does God use otherwise ordinary people as the conduits for his miracles? And can science provide an answer to mankind's eternal search for God? Through Joan of Arc, Preston Russell provides a startling conclusion, achieving a reconciliation of science and religion, uniting the physical and the metaphysical.

About the Author Preston Russell, M.D., is a graduate of Tulane University and Vanderbilt Medical School. He also is the author of *The Low Country: From Savannah to Charleston* and the coauthor, with Barbara Russell, of *Savannah: A History of Her People Since 1733*. He and his wife live in Savannah, Georgia.