



# Abraham Lincoln as a Man of Ideas

*Allen C. Guelzo*

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Abraham Lincoln was a skilled politician, an inspirational leader, and a man of humor and pathos. What many may not realize is how much he was also a man of ideas. Despite the most meager of formal educations, Lincoln's tremendous intellectual curiosity drove him into the circle of Enlightenment philosophy and democratic political ideology. And from these, Lincoln developed a set of political convictions that guided him throughout his life and his presidency. *Abraham Lincoln as a Man of Ideas*, a compilation of ten essays from Lincoln scholar, Allen C. Guelzo, uncovers the hidden sources of Lincoln's ideas and examines the beliefs that directed his career and brought an end to slavery and the Civil War.

These essays reveal Lincoln to be a man of impressive intellectual probity and depth as well as a man of great contradictions. He was an apostle of freedom who did not believe in human free will; a champion of the Constitution who had to step outside of it in order to save it; a man of many acquaintances and admirers, but few friends; a man who opposed slavery but also opposed the abolition of it; a man of prudence who took more political risks than any other president.

Guelzo explores the many faces of Lincoln's ideas, and especially the influence of the Founding Fathers and the great European champions of democracy. And he links the 16th president's struggles with the issues of race, emancipation, religion, and civil liberties to the challenges these issues continue to offer to Americans today.

Lincoln played many roles in his life—lawyer, politician, president—but in each he was driven by a core of values, convictions, and beliefs about economics, society, and democracy. *Abraham Lincoln as a Man of Ideas* is a broad and exciting survey of the ideas that made Lincoln great, just as we celebrate the bicentennial his birth.

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