

## Is argument from silence enough to cast doubt on Jesus existence?

In many pro-Christian books we read that Jesus must have existed when not one of the many bitter and barbaric enemies the early Church had, queried his existence. If Jesus had not existed it is thought, this would have been the ultimate weapon for the antichrists to use against Christianity to destroy it.

But there are many world religions and only one or none of them can be true. The intelligent must be able to use the truth to destroy the false ones and yet they still exist. It follows that people would still say their god was a real person even if he was conceived only in a twisted mind and get away with it.

The early Christians were blackened and slandered and butchered by their enemies. The New Testament says that their enemies preferred to kill and slander Christianity instead of trying to debunk it. Pliny declared in the second decade of the second century that the Christians were thought to be guilty of killing their children and eating them and revelling in debauchery at which incest was practiced. The enemies of the Christians would have felt that religion could not be eradicated by facts for many religions thrived despite being nonsense. So, they believed they had to use the strategy of persecution to vanquish the Church. Life is hard for Christians today with so many temptations and with our permissive society and that has contributed to the decline of the Church and poor reason has not been as successful in making it slump.

There was a plague that killed many in the Holy Land area in 54 AD and there was the all-out disaster in 70 AD meaning the people who would have known Jesus or if he existed or not were probably dead or exiled and had more important things to think about than him. We know for a fact that the Jewish survivors in 70 AD were enslaved or executed and Rome changed the name of the country to Palestine after the Philistines who had once lived there to express the extinction of the Jewish nation and any Jews round about were only interested in rebellion (page 9, Introduction to the New Testament, Fr McKenzie, S.J., Liturgical Press, Minnesota, 1965) and not in debunking a Jesus who was nearly entirely a Gentile concern at that time. It is a fact that at the time the gospels might have been first thrown open to the public in the second century that Rome vowed that the Jews would never be of any importance in Palestine ever again after the bloodshed of the Bar Kochba revolt.

Sanders and Davies agreed that much of Galilee, Jesus' main haunt, and all of Jerusalem and the temple was laid waste and that many thousands of people were either killed or kidnapped and sold into slavery and that the records would have been incinerated so finding out what happened to Jesus would have been extremely difficult for the evangelists. I would add that they would have had to make do with revelations from Heaven to fill in the gaps.

The Church suppressed anything that was antithetical to its dogma. There should be tons and tons of material condemning Christianity but there is not. The Church would have and must have destroyed it.

The Book of Acts testifies to the book burning being practiced in the earliest Church when converts burned their precious books of magic.

Even if Jesus did exist some would have tried to make it out that he never did exist. If the evidence for his existence was pathetic and the gospels were full of stuff that they could not accept the temptation would have been far too great. So where are these writings? Their non-availability means they have been stored and have yet to surface or they have been destroyed in which case then the Church was terrified of them. And if those who know they are right do not fear the errors of others.

But the great silence about the non-existence of Jesus does not really exist.

There was a silence all right but not a complete one.

In the early Church, there were many people who believed that Jesus Christ was not a man but a vision. They believed that the Jesus who we read of in the gospels was not a man. These people were mystics and were not far from being psychologists. Their Jesus only existed in the mind like modern witches use imaginary people to lead them to spiritual awareness. They were called antichrists who denied the coming of Jesus in the flesh in John's time. In Paul's day, they denied that Jesus had risen from the dead. We know their Jesus was a mental force and not a vision of a separate entity because the New Testament just condemns them and never tries to prove to them that Jesus was real as we would expect if they were saying there was a Jesus but he was only a ghost.

What if debunkers had recorded the facts about Jesus that contradicted the gospels? What if they had written about what an evil man he was or that he never rose from the dead or never even existed?

The Christians would have burned their books vanquishing the truth. And they certainly did that when they admit they reduced books to ashes just for disagreeing with the orthodox position. They would have gone after deadlier books faster.

The Christian would say, “But they would also have come up with answers to their charges – at least the ones they could answer. The Christians had no need or desire wipe away all evidence that they had their critics. The New Testament mentions some lies told about Jesus and Christianity. It is likely that we would have evidence for the inflammatory books if they existed.”

Christians were troubled by dissent and heresy in the first centuries of the Church to an amazing extent. The Arian heresy was once the dominant religion in Christendom. The Church detested heresy and losing control over people so much that it removed anything that could lead to it. As long as anti-Christian books existed they posed a risk to the Church for they could become the ground in which a new heresy could take root.

In 303 AD Diocletian believing that Christians being near places of sacrifice provoked the displeasure of the gods and thereby endangered the Empire for it needed divine protection ordered that Christian Churches must be destroyed and their books handed over to the Empire for destruction (page 49, A Concise History of the Catholic Church). Because of the Romans, many important documents from the early centuries of the Church have been lost. This made the Church’s plot to foist its absurd faith on the world dramatically easier. We must also recall that much valuable information about Jesus was lost when Diocletian ordered the destruction of Christian, truly Christian and nominally Christian, scriptures and literature (page 124, Those Incredible Christians). The Christian Emperors, Theodosius and Valentinian, were as bad in relation to heretical literature.

Theodosius was the Emperor who made Christianity the official state religion so he had a lot to gain from getting rid of any awkward facts concerning the religion.

In the Encyclopaedia of Heresies and Heretics are the following statements:

The Arians taught that Jesus Christ was an angel and was not God. Constantine made a law commanding that “if anyone shall be caught concealing a book by Arius, and does not instantly bring it out and burn it, the penalty shall be death” (page 333).

“The staunch opposition of Catholic Christianity to the Manicheans following Augustine’s conversion led to their demise in Europe during the following centuries, as well as to the destruction of their literature” (page 200).

“In border regions like Armenia, Marcion’s teachings were reverently preserved for several centuries. But the triumphant Catholic Church destroyed all of Marcion’s writings. All that is left are fragments of his work, preserved in quotations that were included in the surviving books of his orthodox opponents” (page 201).

We read in Jesus the Magician (page 1) that in 326 AD Constantine, the Roman Emperor, had the books of heretical Christians destroyed. In 333 AD he gave an edict against Arian writings and mentioned that pagan ones were being destroyed too specifically the works of an anti-religionist, Porphyry.

The argument that Christianity's enemies cared enough to parade the non-existence of Jesus is false. There is no reason to think that they did. And early Christianity was a confusing mess so who would have been that interested?