

## Can you refute the existence of Jesus as you can Napoleon?

Christians bitterly complain about writers who think Jesus may not have existed or definitely did not exist. They argue that they twist the facts to suit their preconceived notion that Jesus never lived or probably didn't.

The Christians say that you could write a book disproving the existence of Napoleon Bonaparte. Perhaps you could. But the book would be exalting small evidence over biggest and in contravention of the golden rule: take the simplest interpretation. It would be ignoring the sanity and consistency of the thousands of people who met Napoleon and the paintings of him and the books about him and the body he has left behind. But with Jesus there were no reliable witnesses and only one book about him was allegedly written by an eyewitness – a contention which rest on appallingly slender evidence - and which refuted itself by saying two independent witnesses were needed while nearly all its own information came from or was collated by one person who could not prove he was a witness. Reports about witnesses are not good enough. That is just the same as depending on gossip or hearsay – they need to be cross-examined and we need the reports. And all the earliest writings had serious disagreements with the gospels and there is no evidence that they knew the historical portions well at all. You only hide fictitious men's biographies until the coast is clear. It is dishonest to put refuting Jesus on a par with refuting Napoleon. The evidence for Napoleon is stronger than the evidence for Jesus. We can answer every piece of evidence offered for Jesus and we can show that the strongest evidence denies his existence. The non-existence of Jesus is more possible than the non-existence of Napoleon.

A mock book was written by Archbishop Whately to disprove Napoleon when Napoleon was alive in 1819 called Historic Doubts relating to Napoleon Bonaparte. There is no way that the evidence against him can compare with that against Jesus or its weakness as is seen from the fact that nobody would want to invent a Napoleon but you can see why they would want to invent a Jesus and imagine that he existed. Christians like to tell you about this book disproving the existence of Napoleon Bonaparte to show how the methods used to disprove Jesus fail. But there were a lot less testimonies about Jesus and a lot more liars around him and speaking for him and no physical evidence that he lived. Napoleon was totally different. If you inflate the evidence for Jesus – for example, if you take the gospels word for it that everybody knew him and ignore the indications within and without the gospels that he was not that well-known – you can make him seem more convincing. That is the trick used by such books. But the fact remains that Jesus' existence is not and cannot ever be as convincing as the existence of Napoleon. Rather than depending on four books that Napoleon was well-known we are depending on thousands published and unpublished by those who lived in his time. We have his letters and his death mask. If Jesus had really been anybody special his existence would be more provable than that of the likes of Napoleon. The existence of Jesus would not be forcing faith on us for Christianity is not based on faith in the existence of Jesus by itself but in faith in Jesus being God and redeemer. Jesus is important in the Church not just because he existed for that would not be enough to make him God but because of who he was supposed to be.

Jesus's existence is easier to refute than Napoleon's which speaks volumes!

