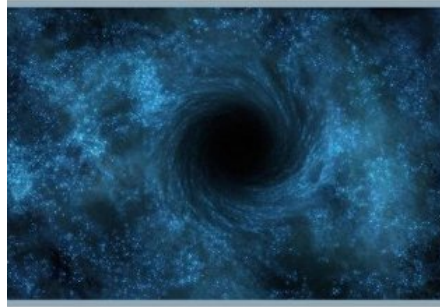


THERE WAS NO  
JESUS, THERE  
IS NO GOD



A SCHOLARLY EXAMINATION OF THE  
SCIENTIFIC, HISTORICAL, AND PHILOSOPHICAL  
EVIDENCE & ARGUMENTS FOR MONOTHEISM

RAPHAEL  
LATASTER

## There Was No Jesus, There Is No God

*Raphael Lataster*

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# There Was No Jesus, There Is No God

*Raphael Lataster*

## **There Was No Jesus, There Is No God** Raphael Lataster

In this unique book, sceptical Religious Studies scholar, Raphael Lataster, seeks to merge the accessibility of popular atheistic writings, with the rigorous scholarly research normally limited to academic journals and monographs. Avoiding the seemingly endless debates on the social impacts of religion, *There Was No Jesus, There Is No God* is only concerned with the evidence. The base content of this fully referenced tome of free-thought has been peer-reviewed by leading scholars in the fields of History, Philosophy, Biblical Studies and Studies in Religion.

Part 1 reveals the spurious nature of the sources used to establish the truth of Christianity and the existence of Jesus, and the equally spurious methods employed by many Biblical scholars. A brief interlude then leaves no doubt that the existence of the Christ of Faith is virtually impossible, and concludes that even the existence of a stripped-down Historical Jesus is uncertain. Bayesian reasoning is shown to justify sceptical views on many topics, including the existence of God.

Part 2 shifts the focus to the God of classical theism and monotheism, examining the evidence and arguments from scientific, historical, and philosophical perspectives. The inadequacy of the case for God is found to easily justify non-belief (atheism). Furthermore, considerations of alternative gods and conceptions of God, lead to game-changing concerns for Christians, Muslims and Jews.

## **There Was No Jesus, There Is No God Details**

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## **From Reader Review There Was No Jesus, There Is No God for online ebook**

**Nick says**

<http://deeperwaters.wordpress.com/201...>

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**Scott chapman says**

**Decent observation**

I liked this book. Although it was like preaching to the choir, but it really brought out the glaring problems that the bible has.

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**Barbara Mayer says**

**Information I can use. A lot to digest and contemplate, which is why I read.**

If you are like me and like to examine different views you will find this book very interesting. I liked it a lot. It did what books are supposed to do, which is make me think.

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**Morgan Storey says**

I know Raphael personally so this is very much a biased review; however I did want to knock off half a star for the couple grammatical mistakes I found, and the sometimes informal tone. Overall I found the book a good introduction to Jesus mythicism, and a good way to tie together the current proponents and opponent views on the matters.

Raphael tries to be somewhat conciliatory, saying if people want to believe on faith then he is not going to stop them, I guess I agree. But he does lay out the case for doubt in Jesus and doubt in God.

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**Kerry says**

Very methodical if a little pedantic. The bayesian approach was interesting I quite enjoyed it although it took

a bit of getting into. Preaching to the unconverted in my case but some interesting points.

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### **Lai-sing says**

Although I felt the book to be a bit repetitive I think is a good compendium of the existent or non existent evidence for Christianity, as well as a good review of how the logical and historical arguments used by Christian apologist work and fail

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### **Victor Manuel says**

Lataster book is a short primer on the strong and rather recent tendency among modern scholars to take a closer look to the mythicist theory of Christian origins. His style is repetitive and not very scholarly. It can be read in a few hours 3-4 at the most. If you want just a very short primer on this theory go ahead and read it but I would recommend best Earl Doherty's: Jesus, not God, Nor Man. or better yet save your hard earned money and buy Richard Carrier's recent book: On the Historicity Of Jesus. Richard Carrier is simply a genius and scholar of the highest order and his book will leave you convinced without a doubt on the mythicist theory

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### **Edward Swalwell says**

This is an interesting and thought provoking work.

I'm not sure I fully agree with all of Raphael Lataster's arguments, but on balance I think he provides a well reasoned approach and an analysis that must be considered, and adds some strength to a sceptical position. I'd definitely suggest this is worth reading for people considering both what they believe, and as a primer for what we really know about one of the Western world's greatest influences, and what inferences we can draw from it.

Before discussing my issues, I'll attempt to summarize the main argument of the piece. This omits many of the subtleties, and the entirety of the Bayesian analysis he discusses for simplicity - please don't take the below as the totality of the work - just the summary. (Also: forgive any misapprehensions on my part, this is a very rough summary of a much more convincing argument).

The first part of the book takes up the bulk of the text and covers the main thrust of Lataster's hypothesis - that there is insufficient evidence to conclude Jesus Christ existed and was the messiah, and that this provides a problem that's difficult for Christianity. He argues that there are three possible, relevant hypotheses about Jesus Christ:

- 1) He existed, and was the messiah (the Biblical Jesus)
- 2) He existed, and was a proclaimed messiah or prophet but not divine (the Historical Jesus).
- 3) He is fictitious. (the Mythical Jesus).

He then goes on to show that the evidence normally presented for 1 and 2 is flawed, and so we cannot reach

those conclusions. He argues:

- The bible is weak as a source, as

- a) it's biased, and has a very clear reason to exist,
- b) it's not got any primary accounts, nor does it cite any primary sources beyond 'a direct connection to God',
- c) it isn't clear whether they intended Jesus to be seen as a literal figure, or a metaphorical one,
- d) it's slightly self-contradictory (or at least illogical) in that later works introduce new details that would have made earlier works pointless, and
- e) other sources for many of the tales or exploits detailed do exist, and thus it's possible that the writers of the bible were using non historical sources for the text.

- There are no other primary sources, which is odd if we hypothesise that Jesus did the things he did, and thus ought to be famous. We would expect other writings to detail the miracles, the darkness upon his execution, and the fact that the messiah had returned.

- The secondary sources, other than the bible, are weak:

- a) few of them explicitly and definitively mention Jesus Christ, and the things he did,
- b) few of them detail the miracles or events,
- c) those that do either mention something sufficiently vague or odd as to be useless (Jesus, brother of James, son of the high-priest being condemned), or were translated by later Christians who many well have doctored the texts.

From this, he goes on to argue that without sufficient evidence for Jesus, and by disproving many of the Philosophical arguments (the second main thrust of the text), there's insufficient evidence to support the existence of the Christian God.

All in all, it provides a compelling case that must, at least, be considered.

I do disagree with his critique of the secondary sources - I don't think he proves that widespread evidence tampering that he hypothesises actually took place (and as he's introducing this, the burden falls upon him), however it does raise a doubt. I also feel that the book is definitely written from a sceptical standpoint, with all the attendant assumptions that entails (as a sceptic I don't necessarily disagree, but do see how discounting 'direct line to god' as primary source might be objectionable to some people).

Nevertheless even without the strands I disagree with, the argument seems solid, and is far better written than my crude summary would suggest, and definitely worth reading if what I've pulled out suggested above seems interesting to you.

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**Dr. Ann Coker says**

**Dry stuff here**

The reader of this scholastic effort should be prepared to work through what is obviously a rewritten doctoral thesis. Mr. Lancaster certainly spent a great deal of time in his review of literature.

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## **Shawn says**

I forced myself to read this as I decided awhile ago that I would let the atheists and "Jesus Deniers" take their best shot at me. I have read all of the books by the current prominent atheists, and I think their thinking has sharpened my own faith rather than weakened it. After all, if I really believe, I shouldn't be afraid of the ideas of those who don't.

Lataster's book is a kind of counterpoint to Craig's book on the Resurrection which I recently read. Lataster questions whether Jesus actually existed at all. One of his basic arguments is that there are no primary, contemporaneous, eyewitness accounts of Jesus's actions, and he regards the Gospels as secondary sources written by people who cannot be trusted because they were promoting their own religion.

Furthermore, he suggests that the whole thing might simply have been invented in Paul's furtive imagination. Chief among his arguments is the nonexistence of primary sources makes any historical claims about even the existence of Jesus historically questionable.

But, to accept Lataster's argument, it seems to me that you would have to accept an interpretation of Paul and James's letters that I think is a stretch. And you also have to believe that James, the apostles, the Church in Jerusalem, the Church's across the diaspora, etc., all bought into a belief in an imaginary figure that they were willing to die for - or that they were inventions as well.

This is why many, if not most scholars who used to question the existence of Jesus, have abandoned that claim.

To believe you have to believe that those who wrote the epistles and the Gospels were basically telling the truth as they knew it, and meant what Christians at the time thought they said.

In the second part of the book Lataster basically says there's no scientific evidence of the existence of God. Well, duh... I guess that's why they call it faith.

However, there's so much of human experience that Lataster leaves out of this book that give believers of all kinds really good reasons to believe in God.

One thing that could bring all of us together, is the awe that we must have about the infinite expanse of things we know exist, but cannot see or understand. That doesn't stop us from using faith or science to come to what we believe are logical thoughts about what it all means to us. But, the pursuit of that knowledge is what brings us into common cause.

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## **Mark Nichols says**

A silly book. Unfortunately the argument runs foul of the very thing Christians are accused of: beginning with preconceptions, and interpreting the evidence to suit. Bringing Bayesian logic to the fore, and 'disproving God' on the basis of placing preconceptions into a formula is just nonsense. Essentially, the argument runs thus: If we haven't experienced miracles, or someone rising from the dead, then it is illogical (implausible) to believe that it ever happened. Given that's the case, then the gospels were made up, the resurrection story is a hoax, and - why not? - Jesus never existed. Fabrication, it is argued, is the best explanation for Christianity's rise.

Fav quote: "Given that the claim is inherently implausible, the evidence is poor, and alternative explanations such as fabrication are highly plausible, the matter can be considered settled. It is reasonable to believe that Jesus, if he ever existed (non-existence theories would also be factored among the alternative hypotheses), was not resurrected from the dead by God".

And so, the Christian message dissipates in a puff of logic.

Hmmm. There's an alternative explanation for Christianity's rapid growth and influence. Could its message, perhaps, be true? Could an actual resurrection by one claiming to be the Son of God have inspired a small group of nobodies on the fringe of the Roman Empire to risk their lives for a Kingdom not of this world? Could the associated witness of the Holy Spirit have amplified the message such that it rapidly became accepted across the Roman Empire, and beyond? Paul had it in 1 Corinthians 15:12-19. If, in fact, Jesus had been raised from the dead, what would we expect to see historically happen as a result of that? Based on the evidence of what actually happened, the resurrection seems very likely.

Anyways, back to the book. To sum, the method is awful; the claims, ambitious. Way too much is made of sketchy connections - somewhat ironic, given the tone of the author regarding the evidence for the Christian faith. The author admits that Bayes' Theorem is subject to GIGO - Garbage In, Garbage Out. A tool not suitable for sorting garbage is definitely not one suitable as the basis for the claims of the title of the book.

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### **Constance Faulk says**

A "couldn't pick it up" type book.

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### **Julien says**

Very well documented and written if a bit repetitive at times. I particularly enjoyed the deconstruction of the philosophical demonstration of the existence of God. I would call them the Ten Steps to Wisdom and will try to use them in the future.

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### **Steven Williams says**

Even though Lataster claims the book was not intended to convert believers into unbelievers, I can't imagine someone with at least a partially open mind would not question their belief in Jesus and God. Great book. I would suggest it to anyone.

