

Title: Going Out to Conquer: A New Look at Napoleon's Rule in Light of Biblical Kingship and Enlightenment Thought

Program of Study: History (non-thesis)

Presentation Type: PowerPoint

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Category: Textual or Investigative

Abstract: Napoleon Bonaparte is a man of many faces. He has enjoyed much fame for his military successes throughout most of Europe during his reign of over a decade. He is most famous for uniting war-torn France under a unified purpose—to become the best in Europe. However, Napoleon's political and military career requires a thorough examination as to whether or not he truly fulfilled the expectations of French thinkers who preceded him. Some of these included Christian philosophers who believed firmly in absolute monarchy, and expected a monarch to be a godly person who lived up to biblical standards. On the other side of the balance were French Enlightenment *philosophes* who wanted government to serve the needs of the people and the greater good. Napoleon, however, was in a class of his own. This paper provides a synopsis of the French Revolution as well as Napoleon's rise, glory, and fall. This paper also examines Napoleon's reign carefully in light of seventeenth and eighteenth-century French absolutist thought, with parallels to biblical kingship. This paper further examines Napoleon in light of the expectations of the Enlightenment. This is a new way to look at Napoleon that is necessary due to the interest Christians took in him, as well as the pattern of political philosophy and religious thought present prior to Napoleon.