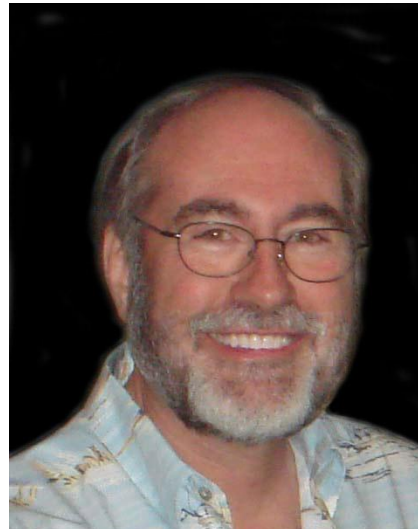


© 2013 Robert Greg Cavin and Carlos A. Colombetti

All rights reserved.

May not be reproduced in any form without written permission of

Cavin and Colombetti



The Great Mars Hill Resurrection Debate

Robert Greg Cavin

Michael Licona

The Resurrectionist



"Smith"

Represents: Licon, Craig, Davis, the McGrews, Swinburne, et al.

The Anti-Resurrectionist



"Jones"

Represents: Cavin and Colombetti

**Cavin:
Background on
the Problem of
the Resurrection**

Academic Background

- **B.A. in Religion—USC**
 - President of Trojan Christian Fellowship at USC
 - Member Campus Crusade for Christ
- **M.A. in Theology—Fuller Seminary**
- **Ph.D. in Philosophy—UC Irvine**
 - Nelson Pike, Brian Skyrms, & Karel Lambert
- **Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies—Cypress College**

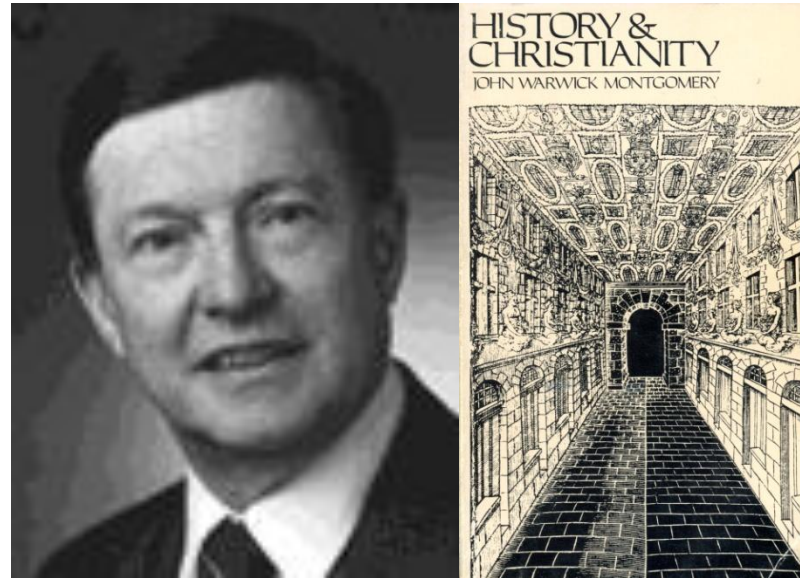
Pre-Bayesian Influences



Josh McDowell

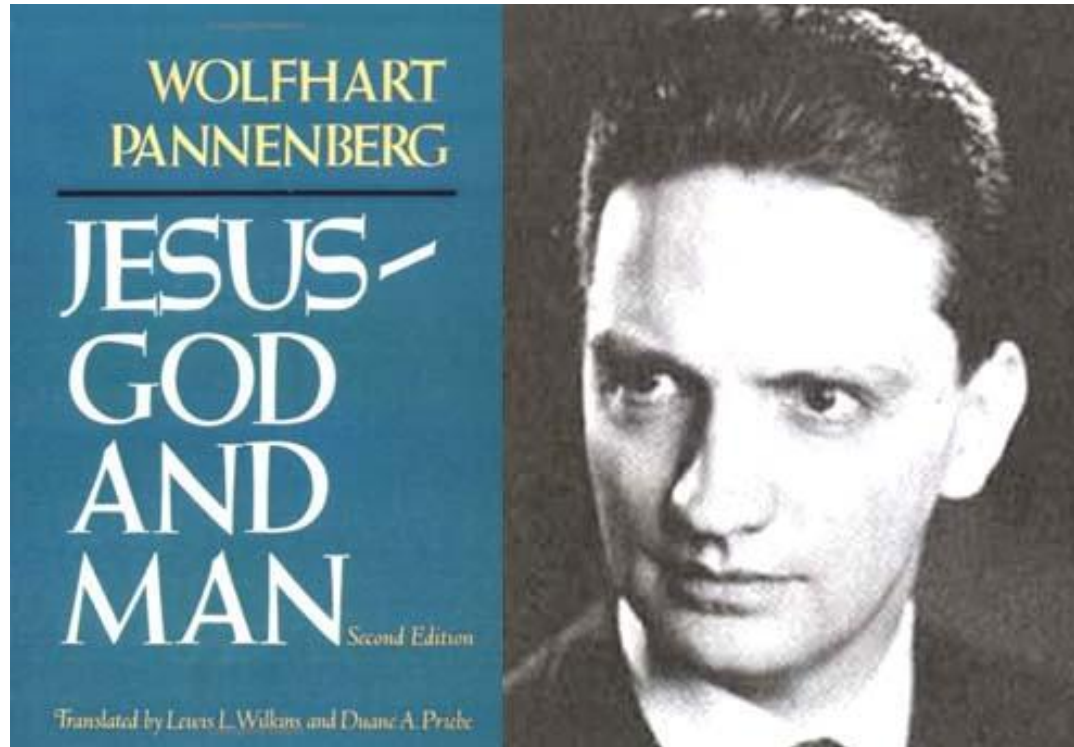
Evidence That Demands A Verdict

Pre-Bayesian Influences



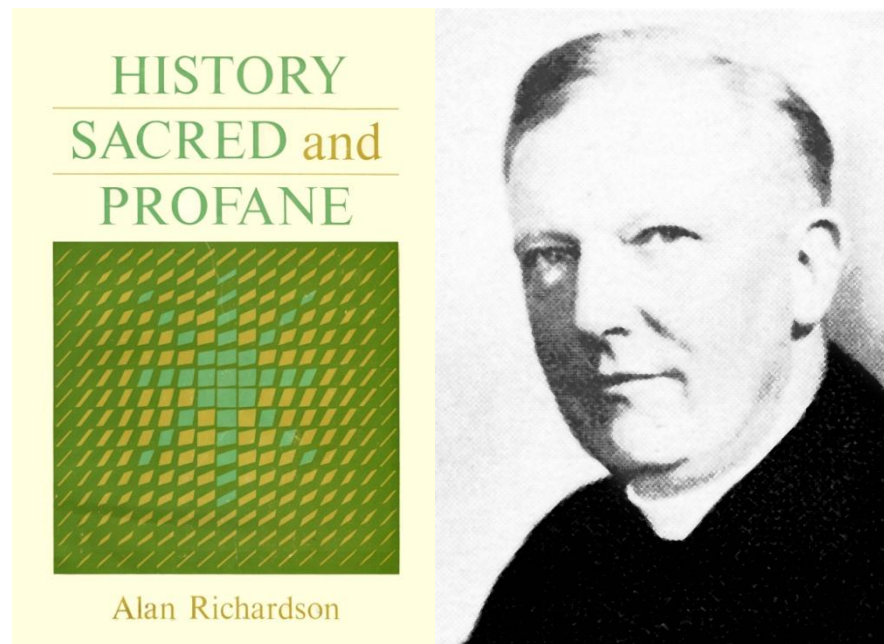
John Warwick Montgomery History & Christianity

Pre-Bayesian Influences



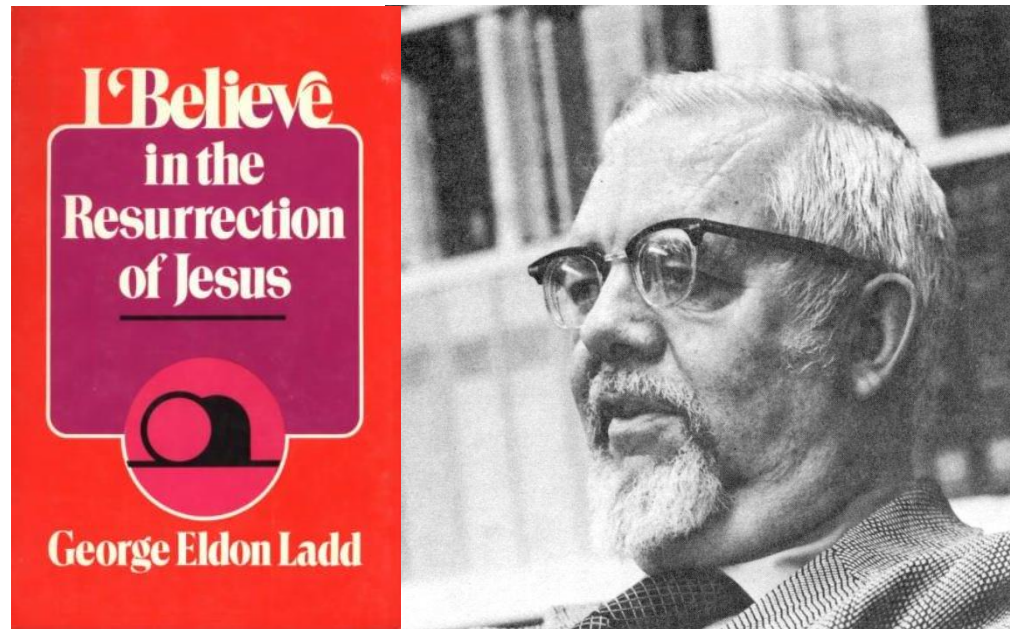
Wolfhart Pannenberg Jesus—God and Man

Pre-Bayesian Influences



Alan Richardson History—Sacred and Profane

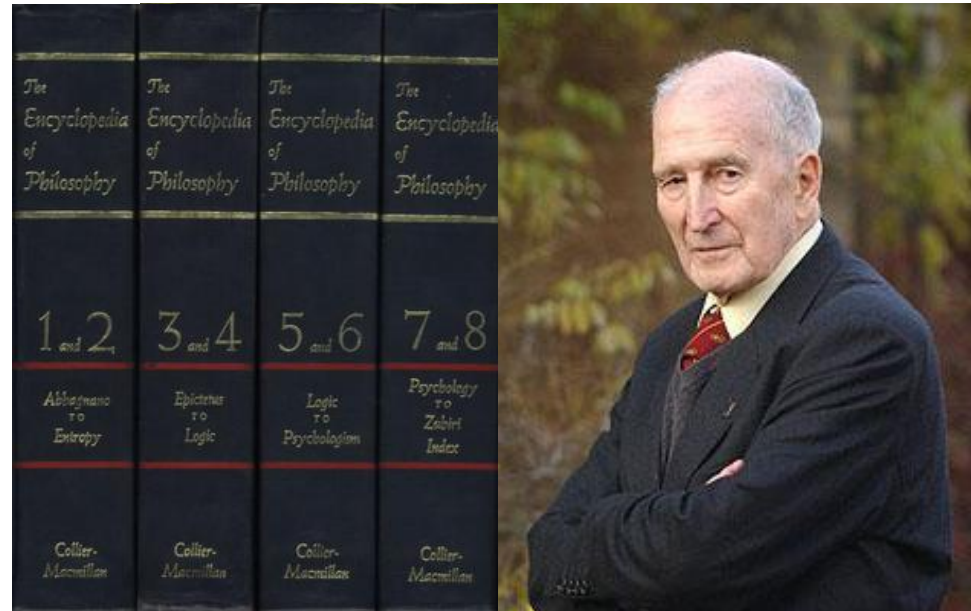
Pre-Bayesian Influences



George Eldon Ladd

I Believe in the Resurrection of Jesus

Pre-Bayesian Influences



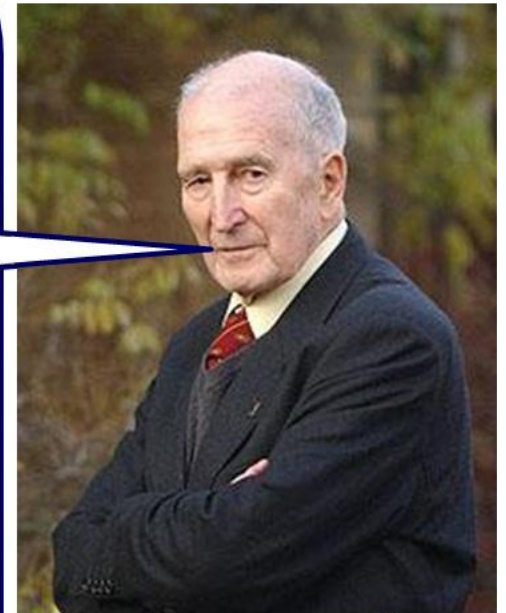
Antony Flew
"Miracles"

The Encyclopedia of Philosophy

The Resurrectionist is Guilty of the Fallacy of Special Pleading

The Argument for the Resurrection comes down to an arbitrary case of special pleading:

1. It is **psychologically impossible** that the disciples stole the body and lied.
 2. It is **biologically impossible** that Jesus merely swooned on the cross and then recovered in the tomb.
 3. It is **psychologically impossible** that the disciples had hallucinations of Jesus.
-
4. Therefore, the **biologically impossible** must have occurred: Jesus rose from the dead!

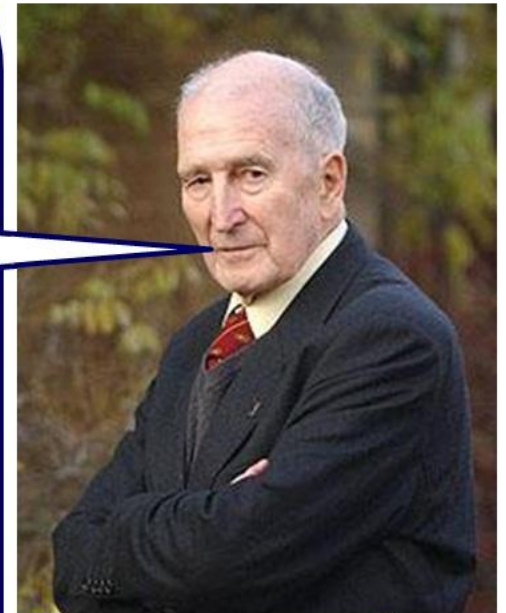


Antony Flew

The Resurrectionist is Guilty of the Fallacy of Special Pleading

One can just as well argue:

1. It is **psychologically impossible** that the disciples stole the body and lied.
 2. It is **biologically impossible** that Jesus merely swooned on the cross and then recovered in the tomb.
 3. It is **biologically impossible** that Jesus rose from the dead.
-
4. Therefore, the **psychologically impossible** must have occurred: the disciples hallucinated the Risen Jesus!



Antony Flew

The Resurrectionist is Guilty of the "Naturalism Fallacy" Fallacy

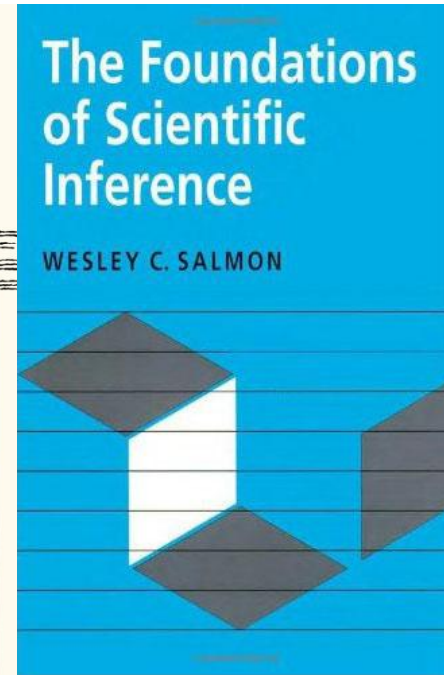
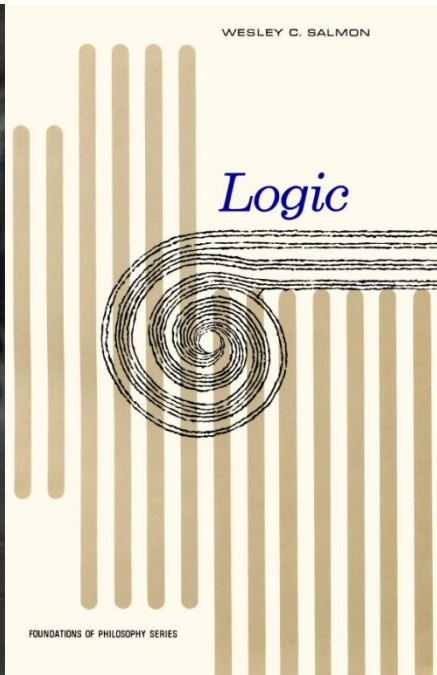
Scholars who reject the Resurrection do so, not on the basis of the historical evidence, which is strong, but, rather, on the basis of naturalist, metaphysical, presuppositions.



But this Resurrectionist claim is false!

The "Naturalism Fallacy" Fallacy is the fallacy of dismissing anti-Resurrectionist arguments on the basis of the myth that these presuppose a naturalistic ideology.

Bayesian Influences

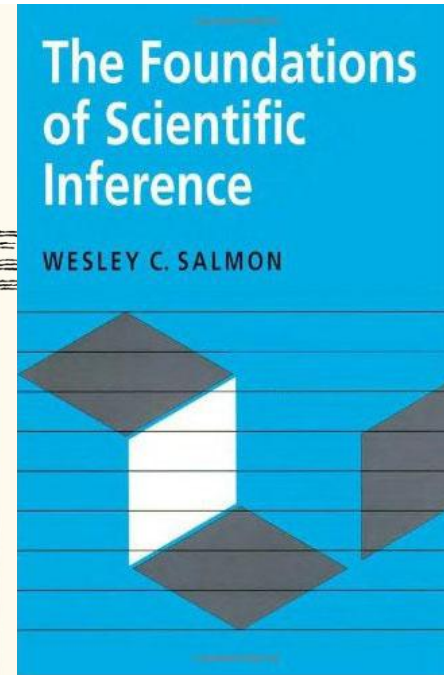
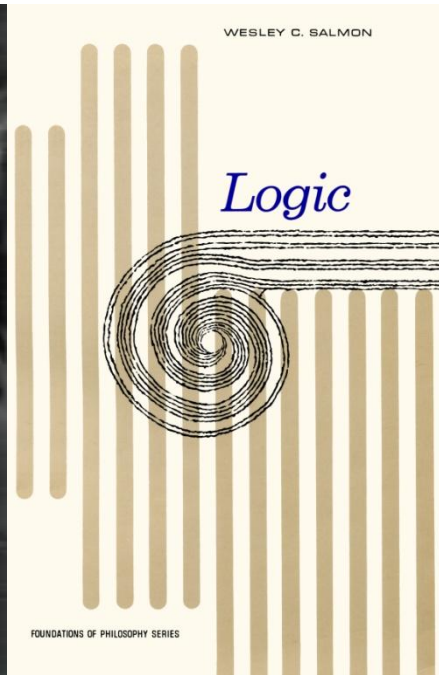


Wesley C. Salmon

Logic

The Foundations of Scientific Inference

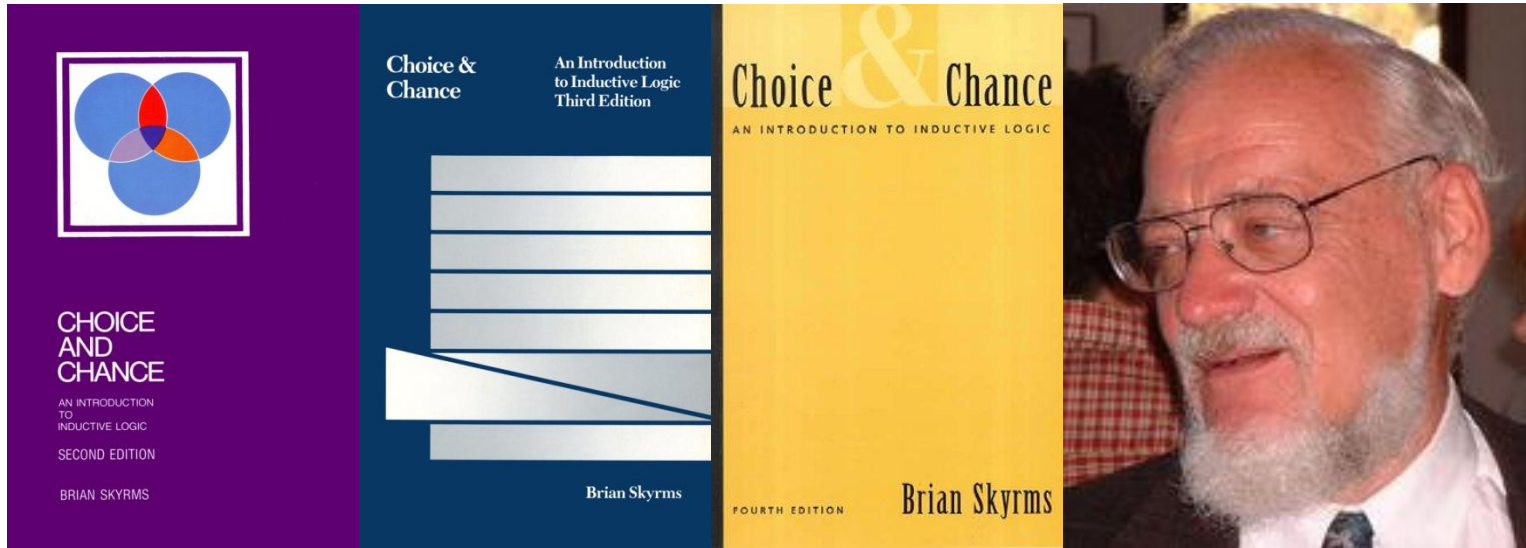
Bayesian Influences



Bayes' Theorem

Bayesian Confirmation Theory

Bayesian Influences

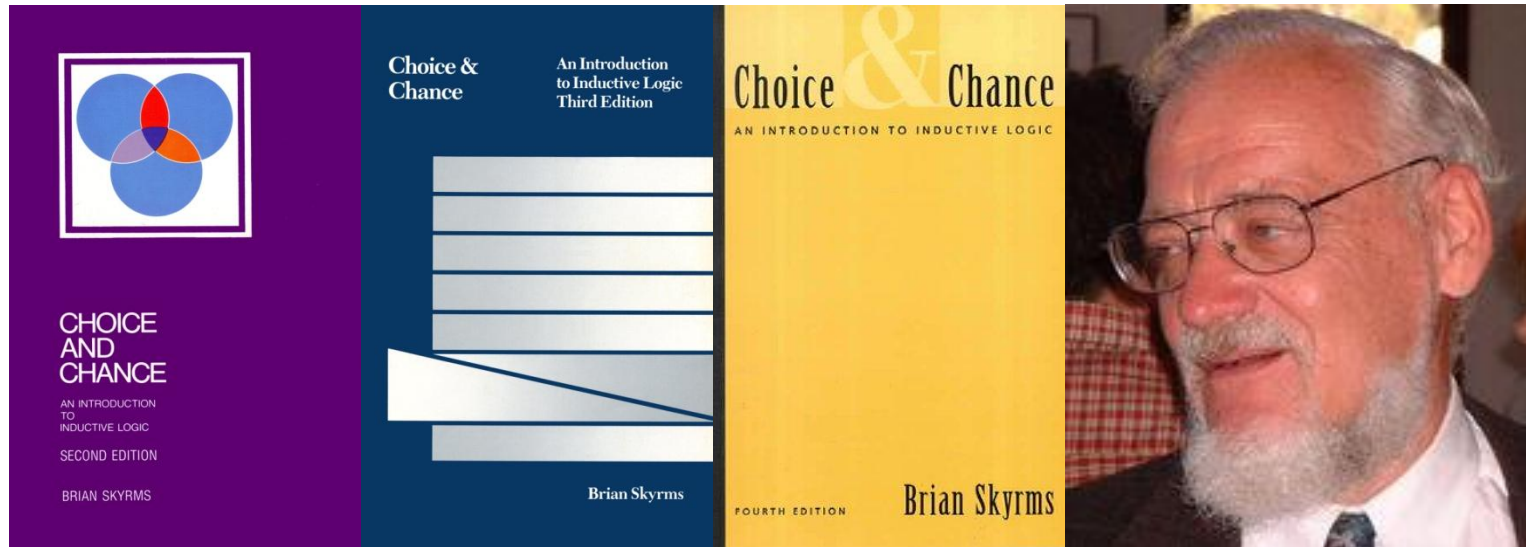


Brian Skyrms

Choice & Chance

Causal Necessity

Bayesian Influences



Brian Skyrms

Belief is a Matter of Degree

Rational Plausibility must be Probability

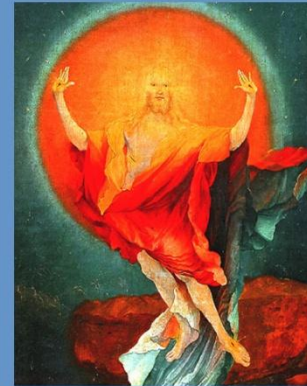
$$P[p | Ch(p)=n] = n$$

Cavin's Critique of Craig



ASSESSING THE
NEW TESTAMENT EVIDENCE
FOR THE HISTORICITY OF THE
RESURRECTION OF JESUS

WILLIAM LANE CRAIG

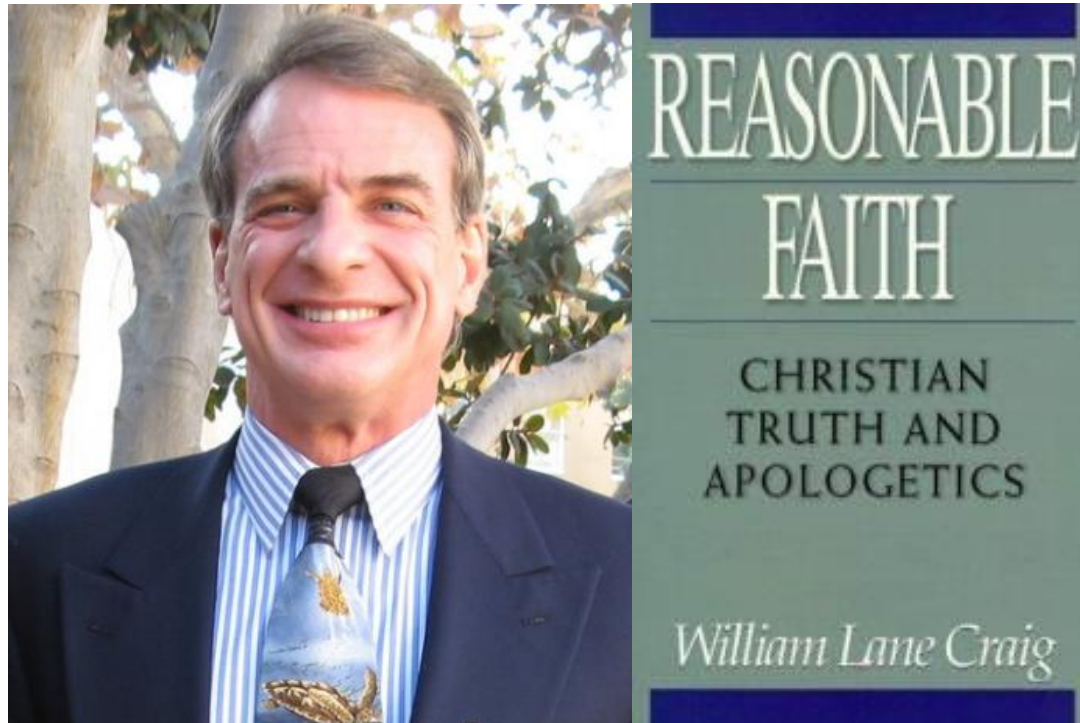


W. Lane Craig

Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the
Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus

Cavin's doctoral dissertation showed that Craig's argument
violates the basic principles of probability

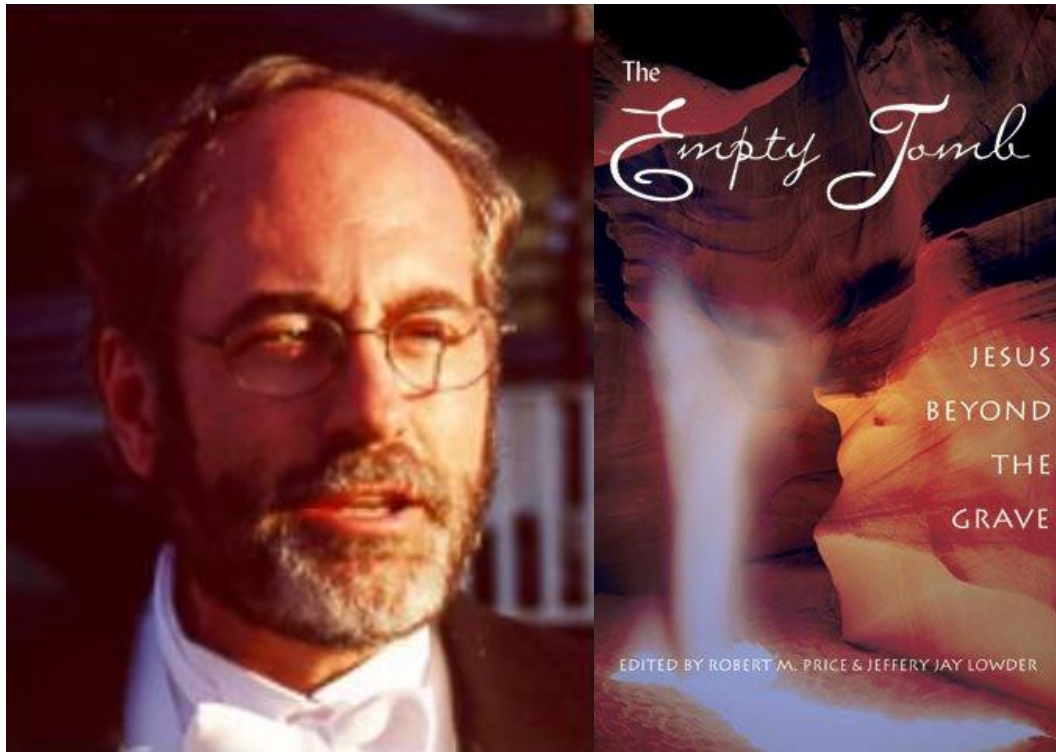
Cavin's Critique of Craig



W. Lane Craig

Craig changed his argument in Reasonable Faith but still violates the canons of probability

Cavin's F&P/TET Article



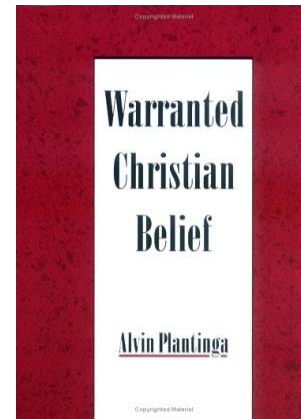
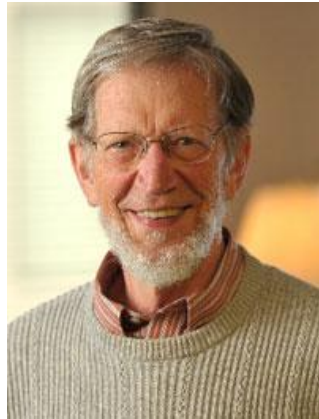
“Is There Sufficient Historical Evidence to Establish the Resurrection of Jesus?”
showed that the evidence is insufficient!

Alvin Plantinga

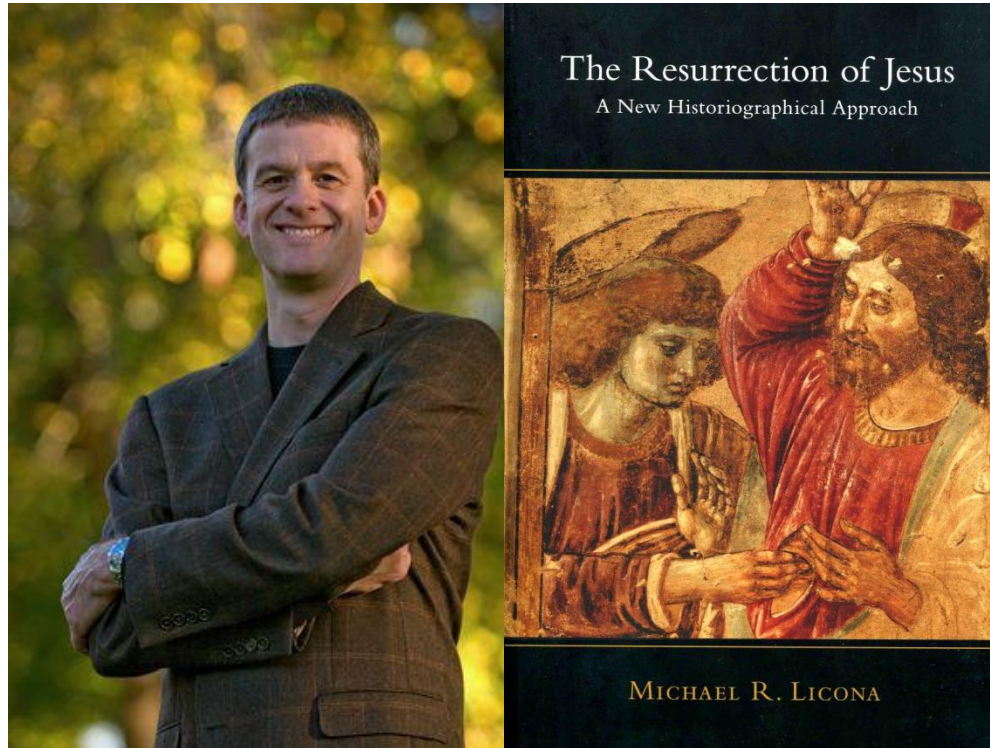
Preeminent Christian Philosopher

Alvin Plantinga cites Cavin's argument in his

Warranted Christian Belief:



Cavin's Debate Opponent



Michael R. Licona

The Resurrection of Jesus

A New Historiographical Approach

In this 718 page book, Licona ignores Cavin's argument but still claims that the Resurrection is the best explanation!

Cavin's Hope for the Debate

That Licona will answer Cavin's argument in
his opening address since it is
the most direct refutation ever given against
the claim that the Resurrection is more probable
than not on the historical evidence!

What Cavin Will Do Tonight

What Cavin Will Do Tonight

1. Argue that **the prior probability** of a specifically **supernatural Resurrection of Jesus by God** is so **astronomically low** that the **Resurrection Theory** has **virtually 0 plausibility**

What Cavin Will Do Tonight

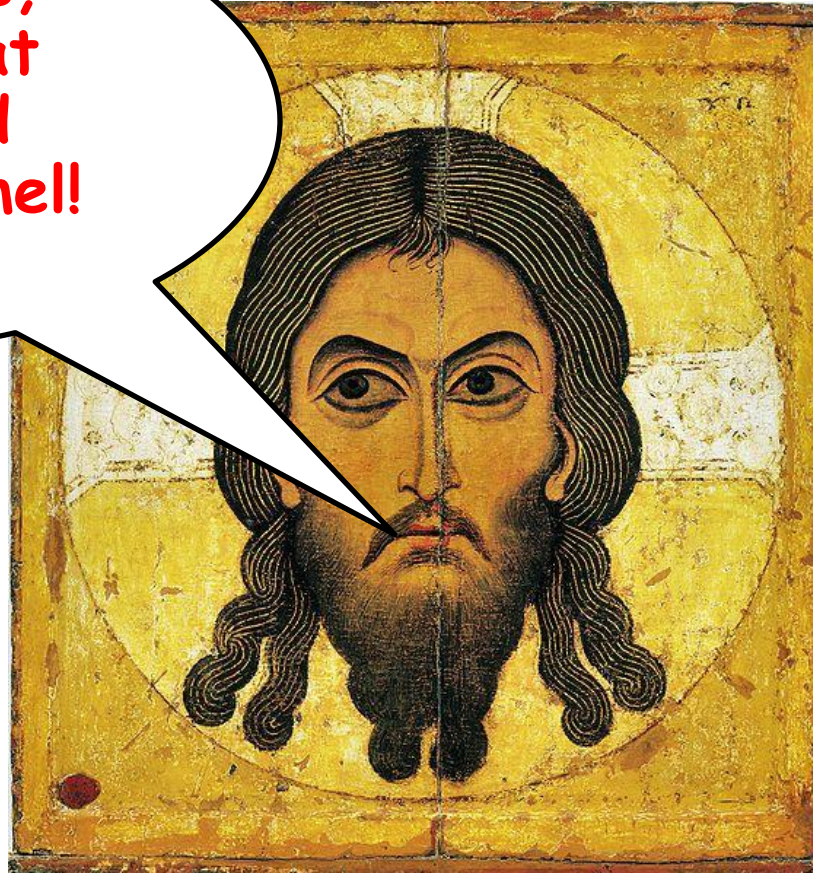
1. Argue that **the prior probability** of a specifically **supernatural Resurrection of Jesus by God** is so **astronomically low** that the Resurrection Theory has **virtually 0 plausibility**
2. Argue that the Resurrection Theory is a **dismal failure** as an explanation of the empty tomb and postmortem appearances of Jesus—being **ad hoc** and **almost completely devoid of explanatory power and scope**

What Cavin Will Do Tonight

1. Argue that **the prior probability** of a specifically **supernatural Resurrection of Jesus by God** is so **astronomically low** that the Resurrection Theory has **virtually 0 plausibility**
2. Argue that the Resurrection Theory is a **dismal failure** as an explanation of the empty tomb and postmortem appearances of Jesus—being **ad hoc** and **almost completely devoid of explanatory power and scope**
3. Show that there is an **alternative** theory to the Resurrection that is a far **superior** explanation

**Blind guides,
who strain at
a gnat, and
swallow a camel!**

Mt. 23:24



Jesus Christ

The Argument for the Resurrection:

Straining at Gnats
while Swallowing
Camels!

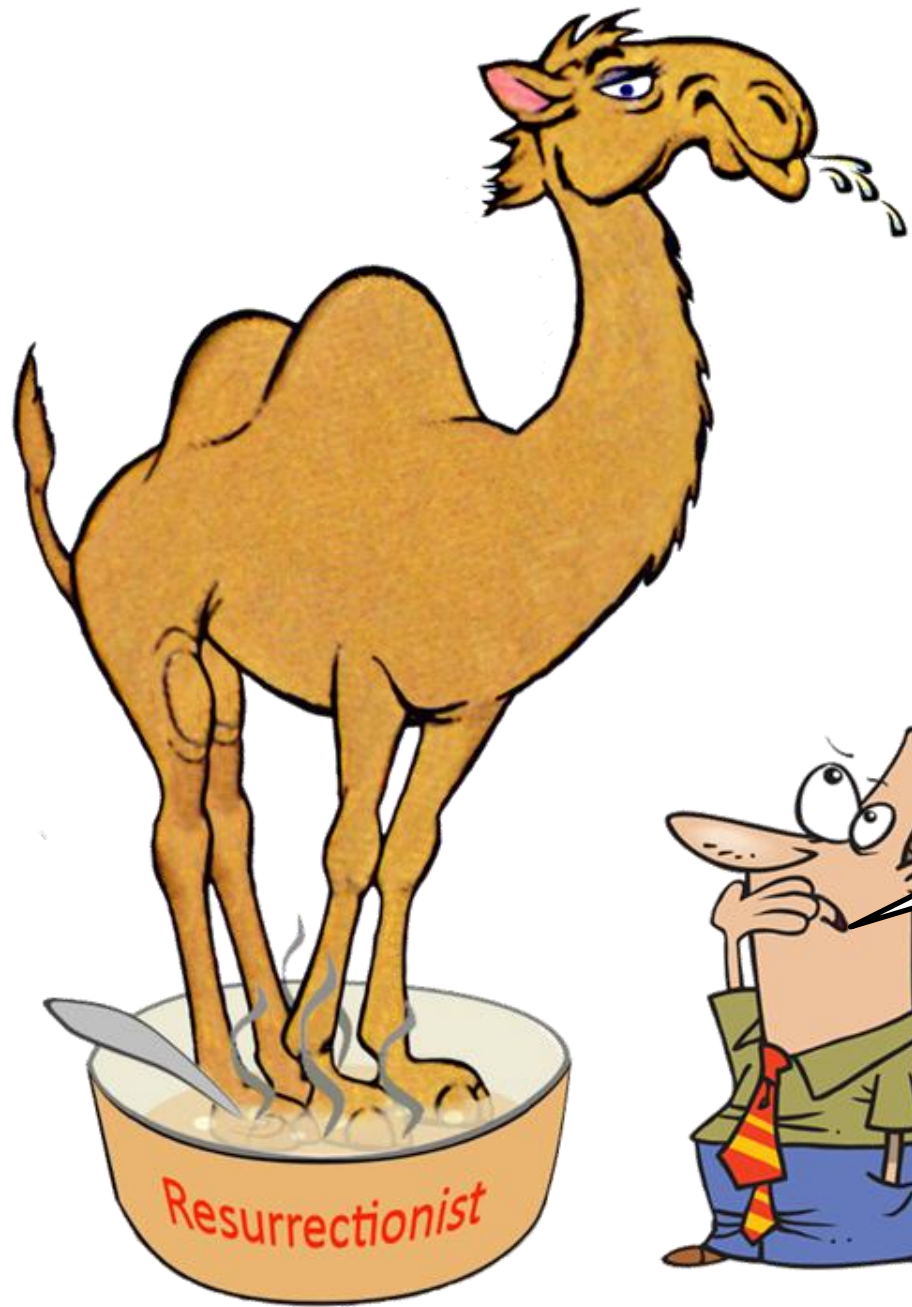
Hey, Jones!
Look!
There's a gnat
in your soup!



Resurrectionist

But Smith!





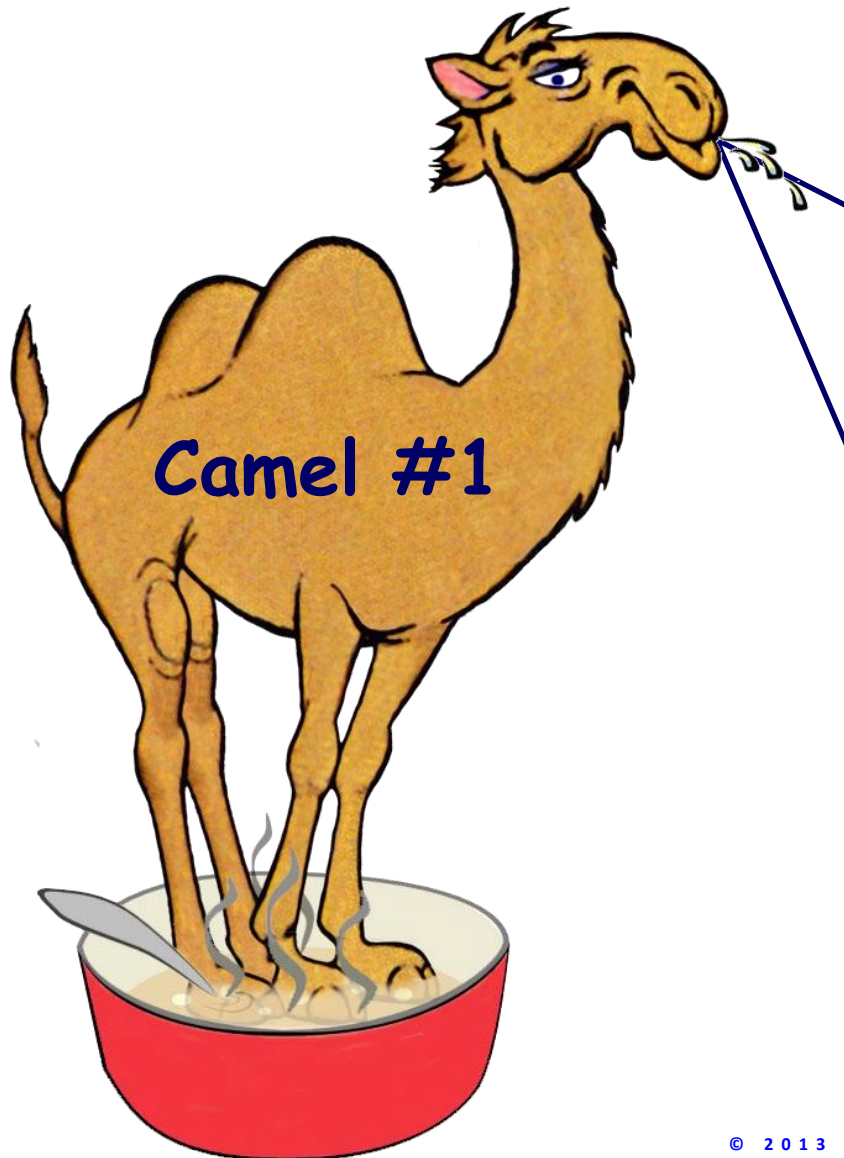
The Sixteen Deadly Camels of the Resurrection



The Sixteen Deadly Myths of the Resurrection

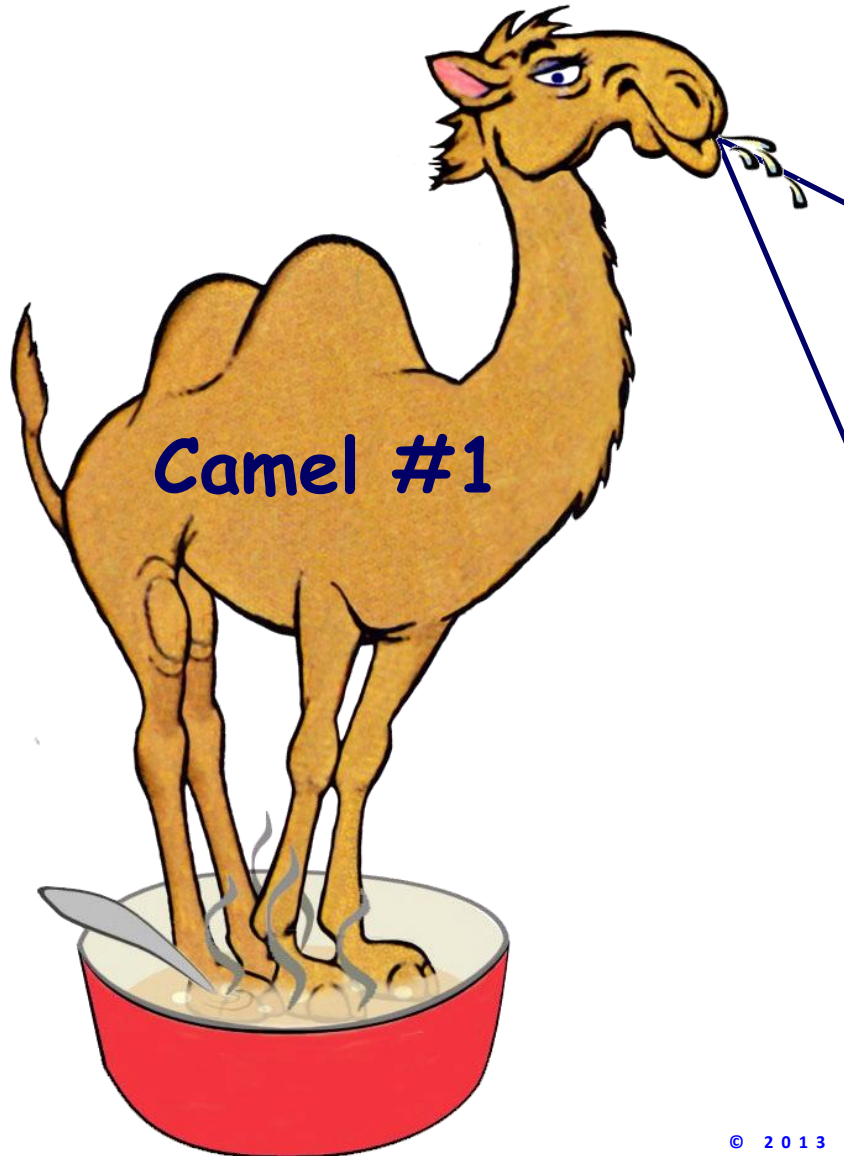


The Burden's-on-the-Skeptic Objection



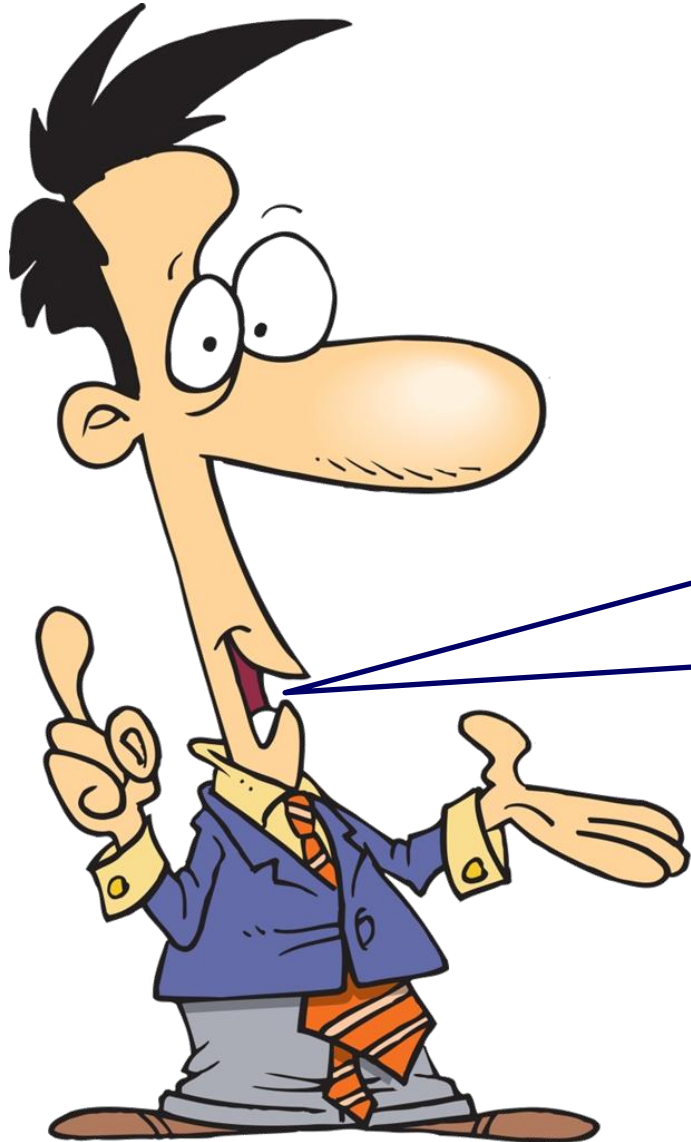
The Skeptic is
Required to
Explain the
Empty Tomb and
Postmortem
Appearances of
Jesus

The Burden's-on-the-Skeptic Objection



The Skeptic is
Required to
Explain the
Empty Tomb and
Postmortem
Appearances of
Jesus

The Burden's-on-the-Skeptic Objection



Licona's thesis
for tonight's
debate is...

The Burden's-on-the-Skeptic Objection

Given the historical evidence,
it is more probable than not
that Jesus rose from the dead.

The Burden's-on-the-Skeptic Objection



To win the debate,
all Cavin must show is
that Licona has **not justified**
this thesis.

The Burden's-on-the-Skeptic Objection



And, to show this, it is **not necessary** that Cavin produce an alternate explanation of the empty tomb and postmortem appearances of Jesus.

The Burden's-on-the-Skeptic Objection



However, Cavin will show that it is actually **the resurrectionist** who is **unable** to produce an explanation of the empty tomb and postmortem appearances of Jesus!

The Burden's-on-the-Skeptic Objection



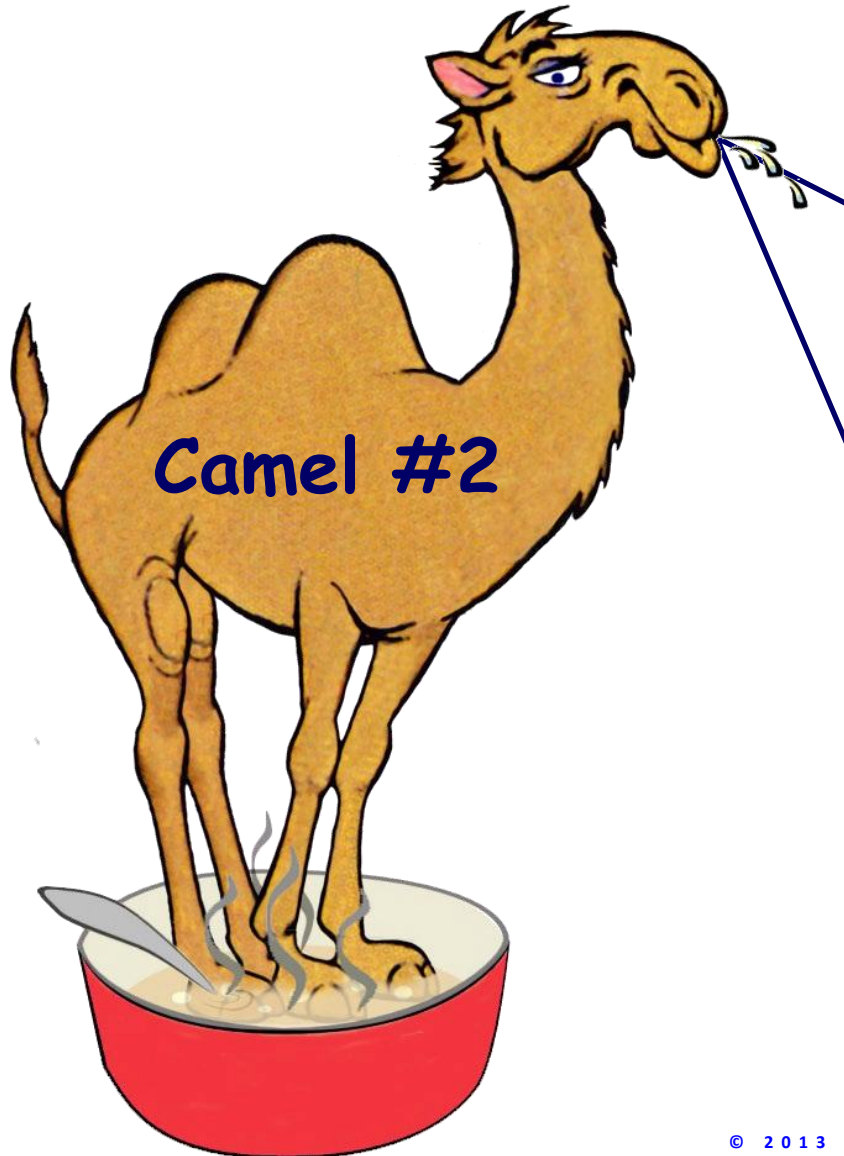
That is, Cavin will show that the Resurrection theory **fails** as an explanation of the empty tomb and postmortem appearances of Jesus!

The Burden's-on-the-Skeptic Objection



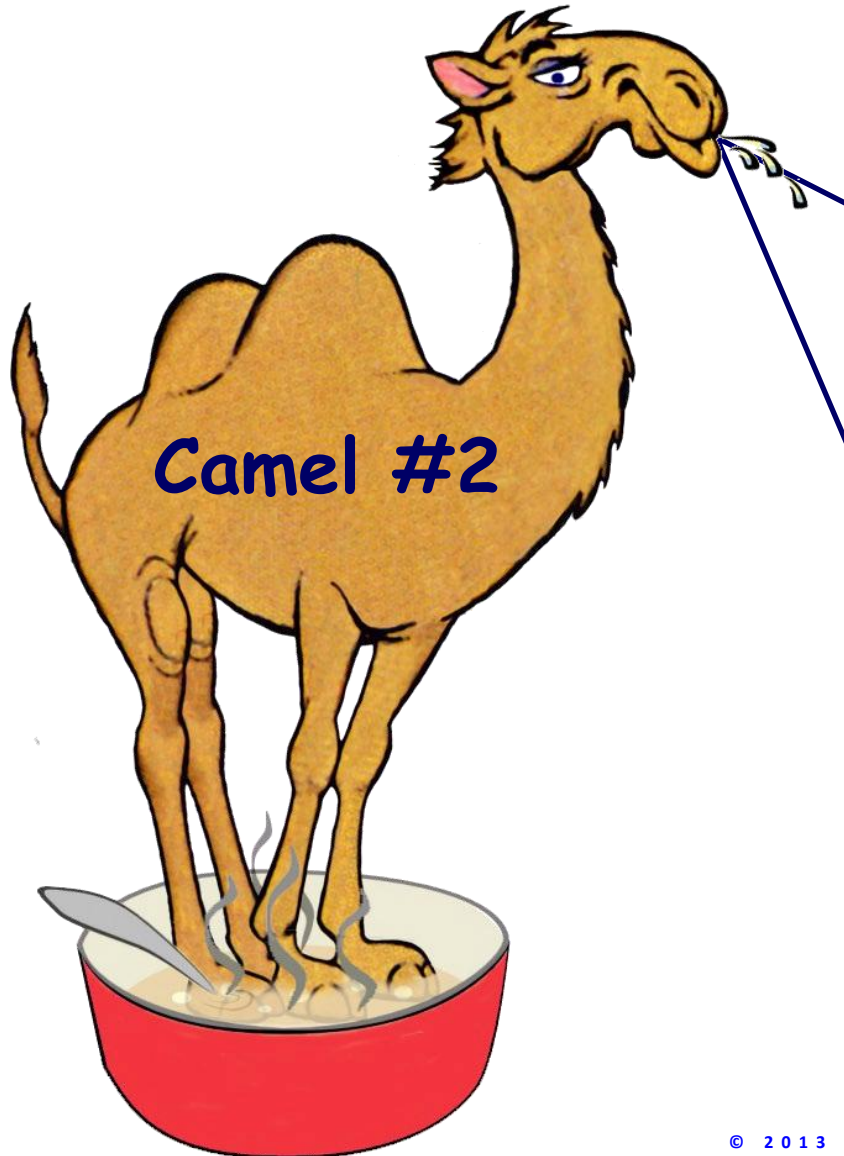
Moreover, Cavin will suggest an alternative hypothesis that **can more logically explain** the empty tomb and postmortem appearances of Jesus!

The ~~S~~keptic-~~A~~ssumes-~~A~~theism Objection



The ~~S~~keptic
falsely assumes
that God does
not exist—so his
skepticism about
the Resurrection
is unjustified

The S~~keptic~~-Assumes-Atheism Objection



The S~~keptic~~
falsely assumes
that God does
not exist—so his
skepticism about
the Resurrection
is unjustified

The S~~keptic~~-Assumes-A~~theism~~ Objection

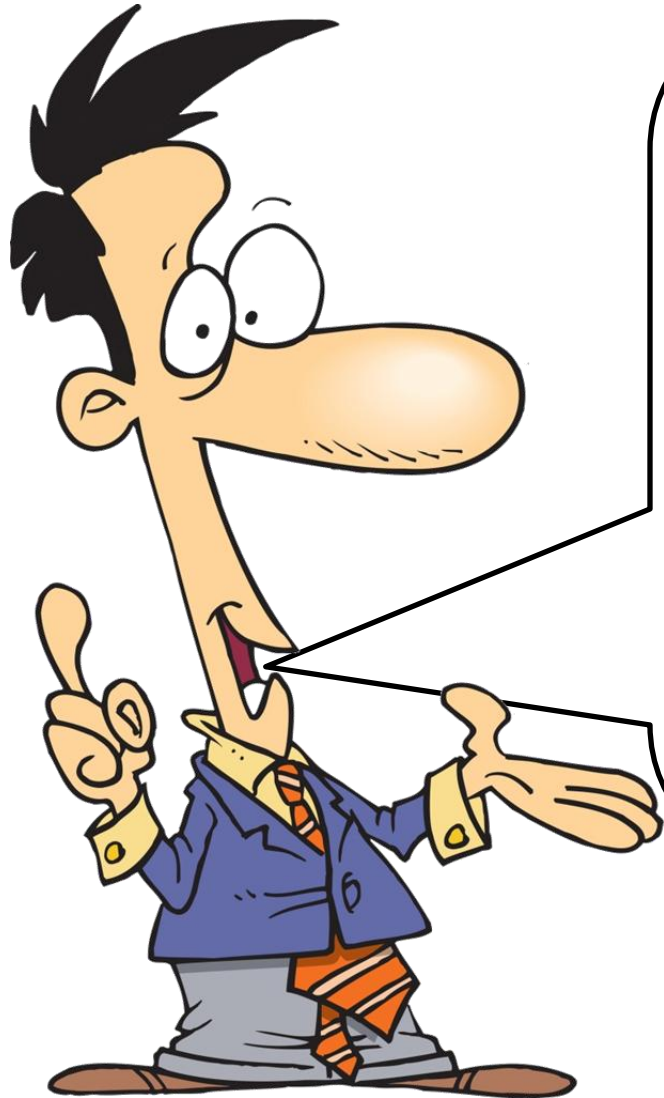


The existence of God
is a **non-issue** in this
debate.

It is, in the words of
St. Paul:
"a **false** stumbling-
block".

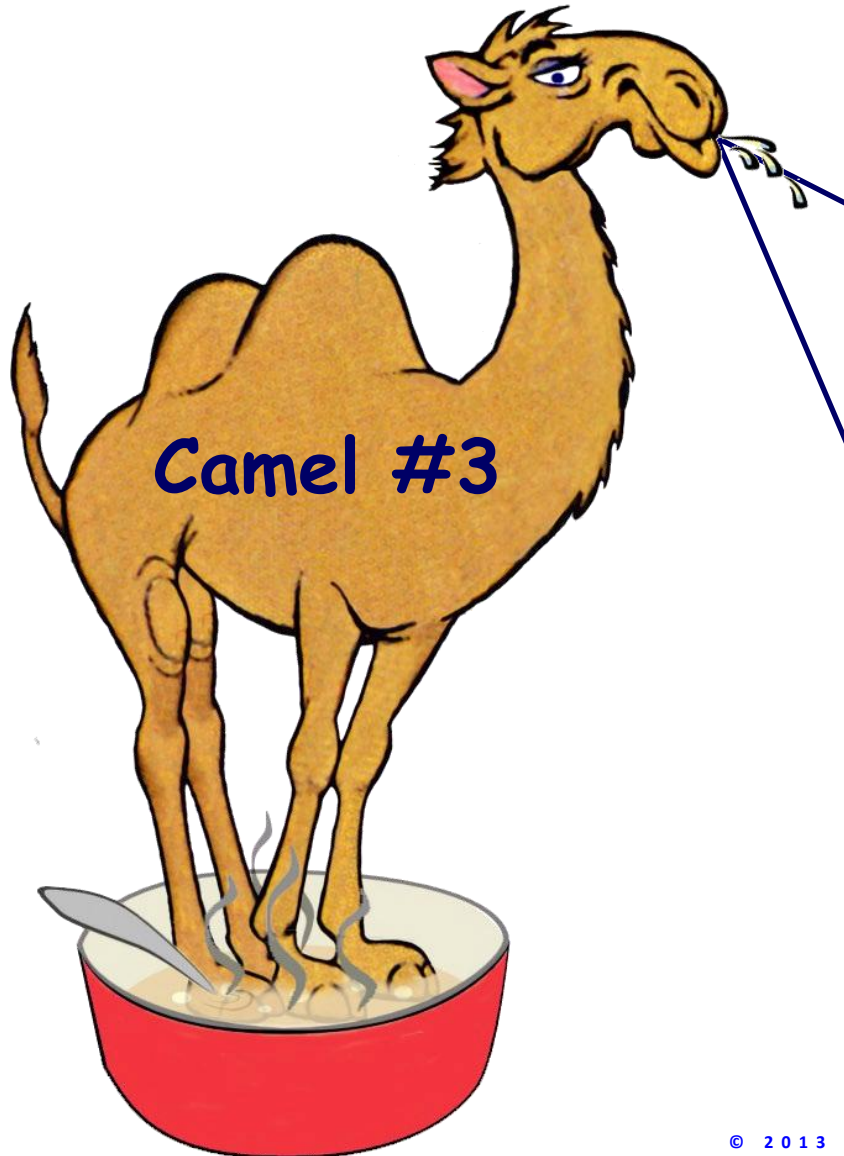
It's a **Red Herring!**

The S~~keptic~~-Assumes-A~~theism~~ Objection



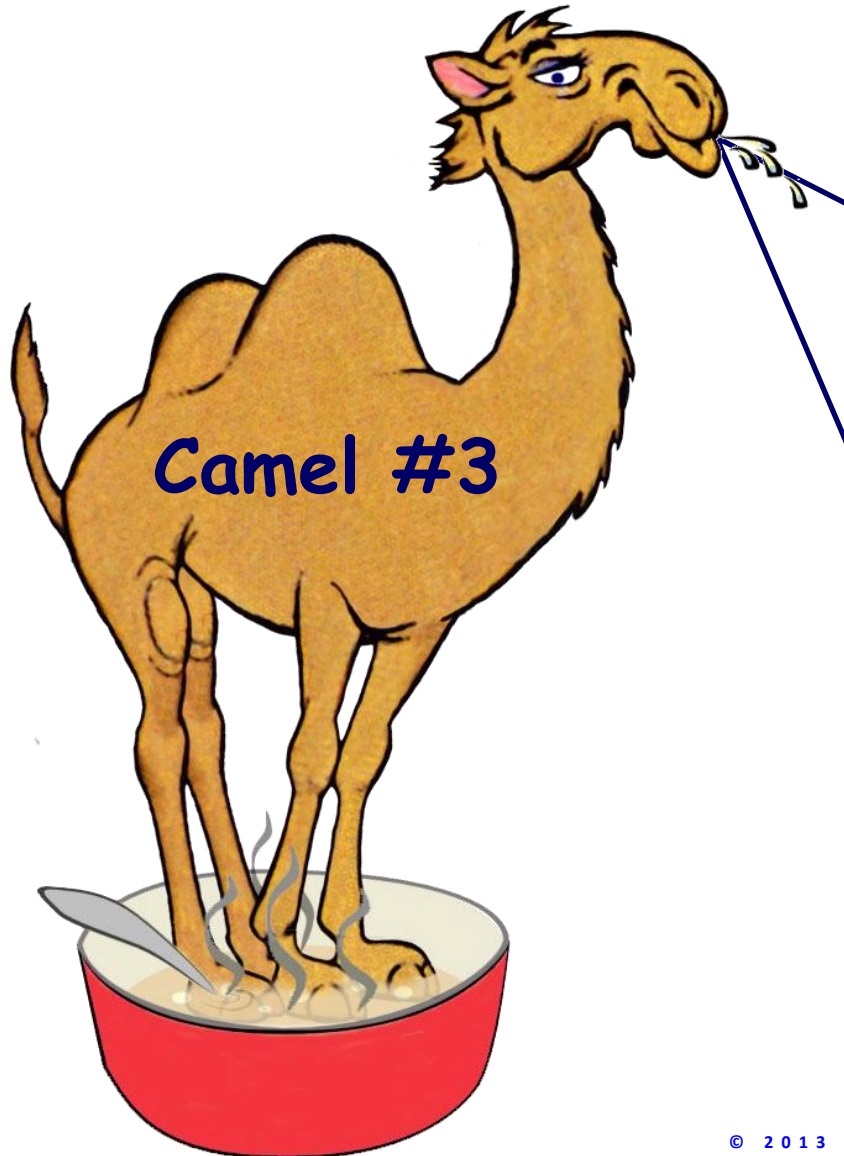
I will assume—but merely for the sake of argument—that the traditional God of Western Monotheism actually exists and has been proven to exist.

The Natural—Not-Supernatural— Resurrection-is-Impossible Objection



Resurrection
cannot be
caused by
Purely Natural
Means

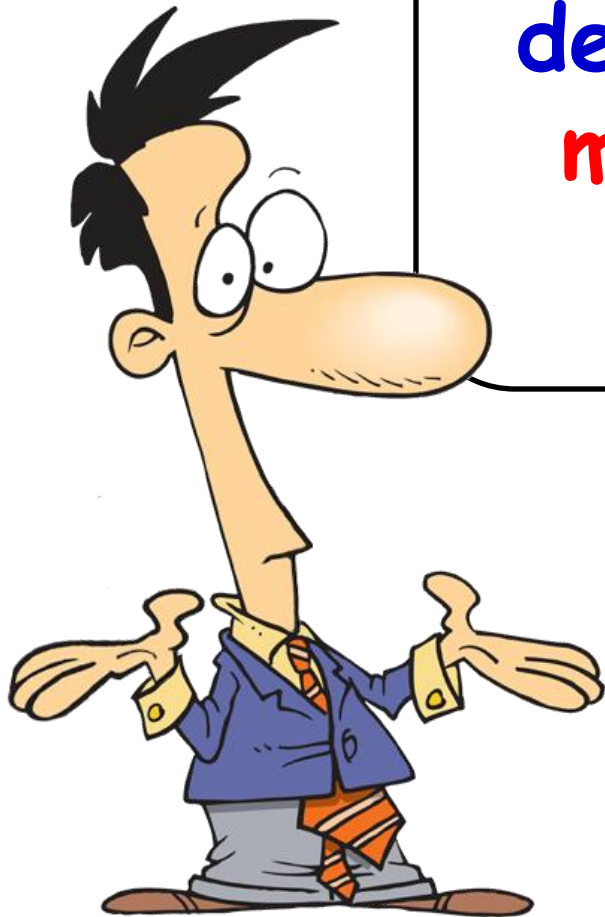
The Natural—Not-Supernatural— Resurrection-is-Impossible Objection



Resurrection
cannot be
caused by
Purely Natural
Means!

The Natural—Not-Supernatural— Resurrection-is-Impossible Objection

Resurrection from the
dead by purely **natural**
means has **super-low**
prior probability.



The Natural—Not-Supernatural— Resurrection-is-Impossible Objection

But my hypothesis is
that Jesus was raised
from the dead
supernaturally by God!



The Natural—Not-Supernatural— Resurrection-is-Impossible Objection

In fact, resurrection by **natural means** is just a matter of moving around the particles of the corpse to positions that correspond to life. There's **nothing improbable** about that—especially given modern **medical nanotechnology!**



The Natural—Not-Supernatural—Resurrection-is-Impossible Objection



Alcor (of Scottsdale Arizona) is working on this even as we debate.

The Alcor Life Extension Foundation is the world leader in cryonics, cryonics research, and cryonics technology. Cryonics is the science of using ultra-cold temperature to preserve human life with the intent of restoring good health when technology becomes available to do so. Alcor is a non-profit organization located in Scottsdale, Arizona, founded in 1972.

What Cryonics Is

Cryonics is a speculative life support technology that seeks to preserve human life in a state that will be viable and treatable by future medicine. It is expected that future medicine will include mature nanotechnology, and the ability to heal at the cellular and

Banking of transplantable organs at low temperature is a recognized specialty of the science of cryobiology. Alcor applies breakthroughs in organ banking research to the much more difficult problem of preserving whole people. Although cryonics is not reversible today, the eventual perfection of cryonics will be of great value to fields such as medicine and space travel.

Cryonics and Religion

Cryonics is an attempt to preserve and protect the gift of human life. The purpose of cryonics is to maintain life, not reverse death. Lack of legal status as a person does not imply lack of moral status as a person. The spiritual status of cryonics patients is the



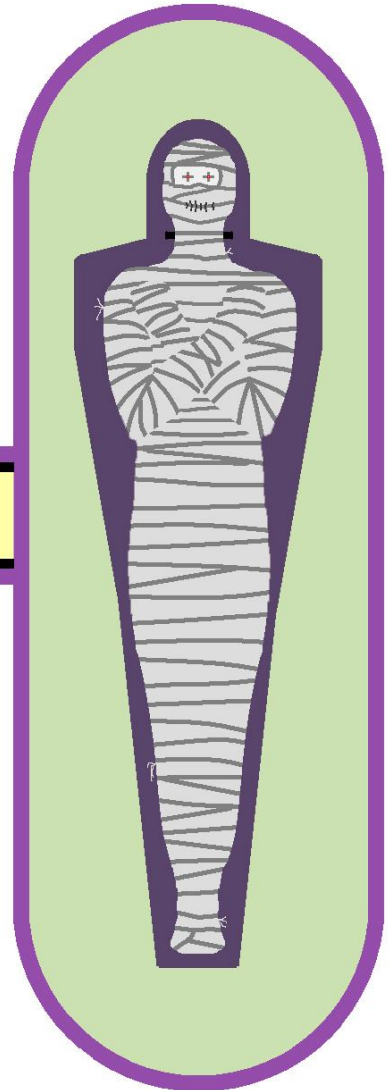
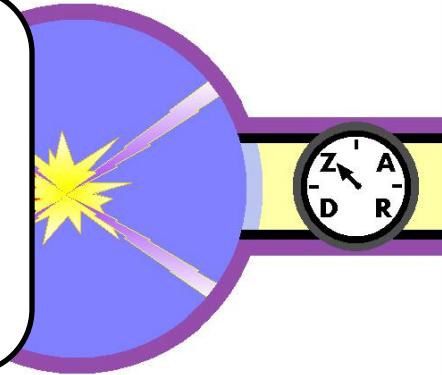
- New Program: Press Notification of Cryopreservation Silent Auction**
- Cryonics March-April 2012**
- Alcor Northern California Meeting**
- Next Alcor Board of Directors Meeting**



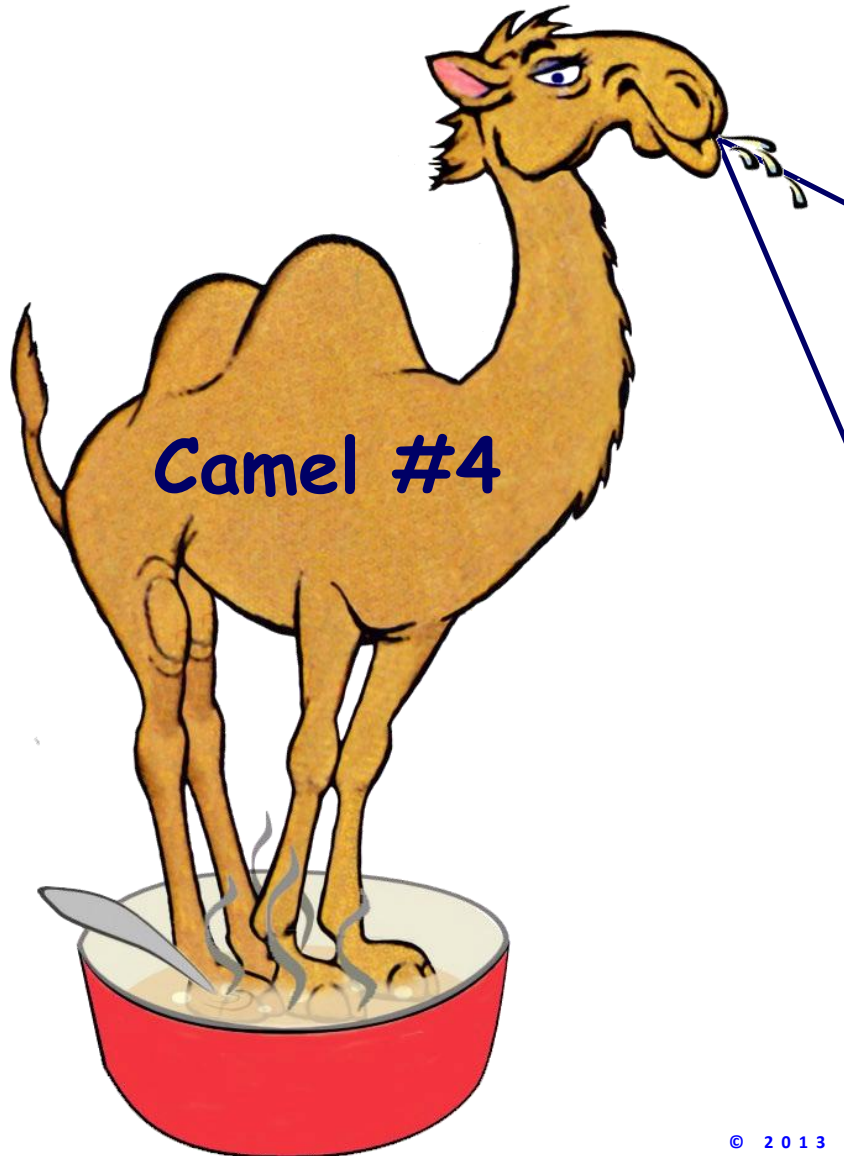
The Natural—Not-Supernatural— Resurrection-is-Impossible Objection



Behold, natural
resurrection via
the
"Christenstein
Machine"!

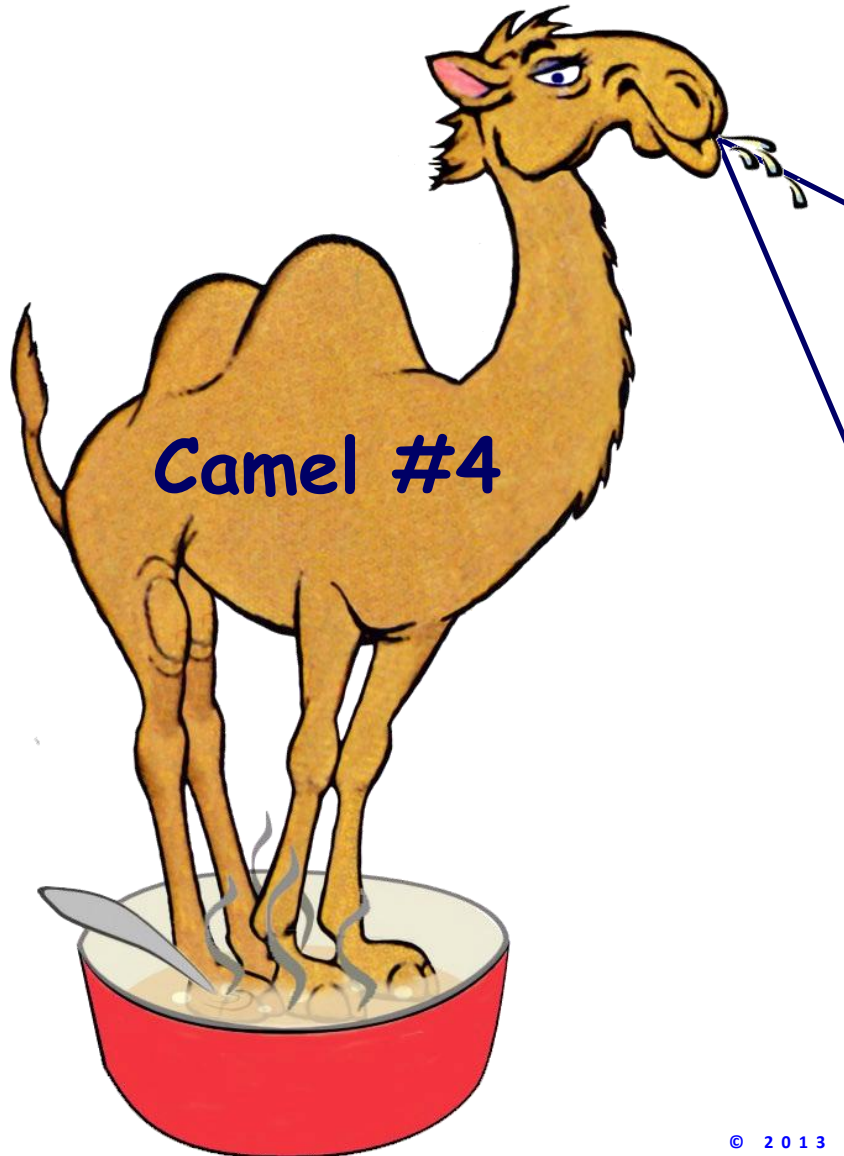


The Divine Interference Objection



The skeptic
wrongly ignores
God's supernatural
intervention by
saying that
the Resurrection
has a low Prior
Probability

The Divine Interference Objection



The skeptic
wrongly ignores
God's supernatural
intervention by
saying that
the Resurrection
has a low Prior
Probability

WRONG!

The Divine Interference Objection

You skeptics
ignore **God!**



The Divine Interference Objection

But prior probability
must consider **God's**
supernatural power!



The Divine Interference Objection

The one hundred billion people who've died and stayed dead prove **only** that **apart** from God's **supernatural** intervention the dead **don't** rise.



The Divine Interference Objection

However, if God wanted
to raise Jesus, then the
Resurrection becomes
100% probable!



The Divine Interference Objection

Consider an **analogy**:
Floating above
the water in your
swimming pool!



The Divine Interference Objection



The Divine Interference Objection

You skeptics would
dismiss this as having
extremely low
prior probability!



The Divine Interference Objection

But all bets are off
if some **external**
agent lifts you out of
the water!



The Divine Interference Objection



The Divine Interference Objection

Likewise, you cannot say the Resurrection has a **low prior probability** since doing so **ignores** the activity of an **external agent**—namely, **God!**



The Divine Interference Objection

You employ a far too
simplistic manner
of determining
prior probability!



The Divine Interference Objection

What's more, God is a
free agent and so
it's **difficult** to know
a priori what he would
will to do!



The Divine Interference Objection

Because of this, we're forced to say that the prior probability of the Resurrection is simply **inscrutable.**



The Divine Interference Objection

To justify your skepticism, you'll need to provide the **background knowledge required** to show that it's **antecedently unlikely** that God would **want** to raise Jesus from the dead.



The Divine Interference Objection

No problem!



The Divine Interference Objection



I agree that God is
all-powerful,
all-knowing, and
perfectly good
and that He can
supernaturally
intervene in the
world in any way
He wants!

The Divine Interference Objection



God made the laws
discovered by science,
so they're in His
power—not vice versa!

The Divine Interference Objection



Then how can you say
the prior probability
that God would
supernaturally raise
Jesus from the dead is
astronomically low?

The Divine Interference Objection



Simple!

The Divine Interference Objection



Possibility is **not**
probability!

The Divine Interference Objection



"If" does **not**
mean "does"!

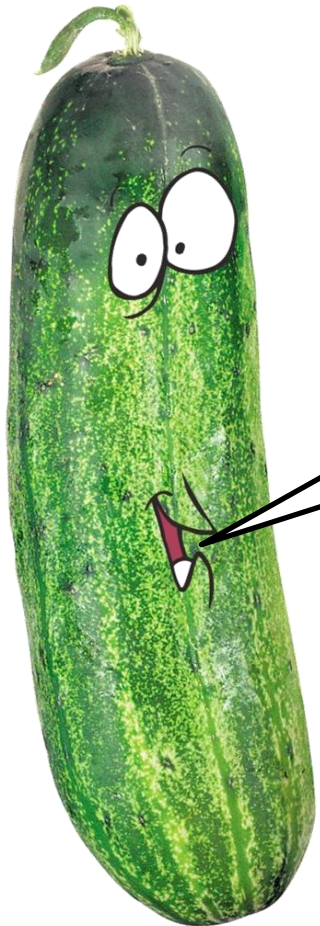
The Divine Interference Objection

If God wills
that I turn into
a gigantic green
cucumber...



The Divine Interference Objection

...then I'll turn
into a gigantic
green cucumber.



The Divine Interference Objection

But it's hardly
probable that God
would will this!



The Divine Interference Objection



The fact that God
can supernaturally
intervene doesn't
make it **in the least**
likely that He **does**.

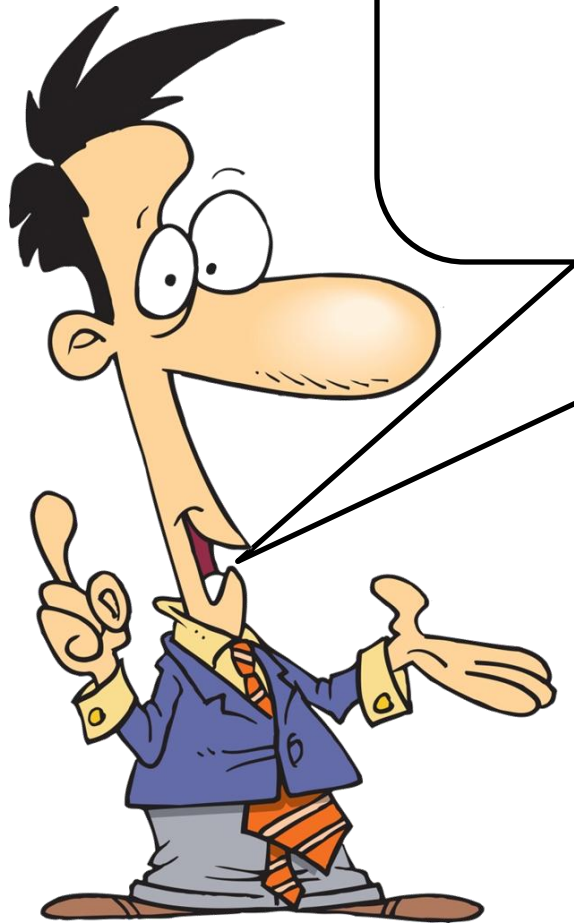
The Divine Interference Objection

Let's return to
the swimming
pool analogy.



The Divine Interference Objection

It's not **unlikely** for me to float in my swimming pool supported by the water.



**Jones Floating in the Pool
being supported by the Water:
Possible—and Very Likely**



The Divine Interference Objection

But, even though it's possible, it's **not very likely** that someone's going to lift me out of the water so that I "float" above it.



Jones “floating” above the Water in the Pool
being supported by Smith:
Possible—but not Very Likely



The Divine Interference Objection

Indeed, observation shows that the **frequency of external agents** lifting me out of the water is **very low.**



The Divine Interference Objection

Not to say, of course,
that probability can or
should be based on
frequency!

Μὴ γένοιτο!



The Divine Interference Objection

And, while it is scientifically possible, it's astronomically unlikely for me to "float" above the water with no physical support.



**Jones floating above the Water in the Pool
with no Physical Support:
Possible—but Astronomically Unlikely**



The Divine Interference Objection

And Probability Theory shows that its **even less likely** for me to “float” above the water being “supported” by God!



**Jones floating above the Water in the Pool
being “supported” by God:
Possible—but even more Unlikely!**



The Divine Interference Objection

It's a blatant **straw man** to saddle me with the view that the **antecedent probability** of what God **wills** must be determined **a priori**.



The Divine Interference Objection

Your fallacy is to ignore the evidence of God's self-revelation in Nature—seen a posteriori in everyday experience and science.



Natural Theology yields Low Prior Probability



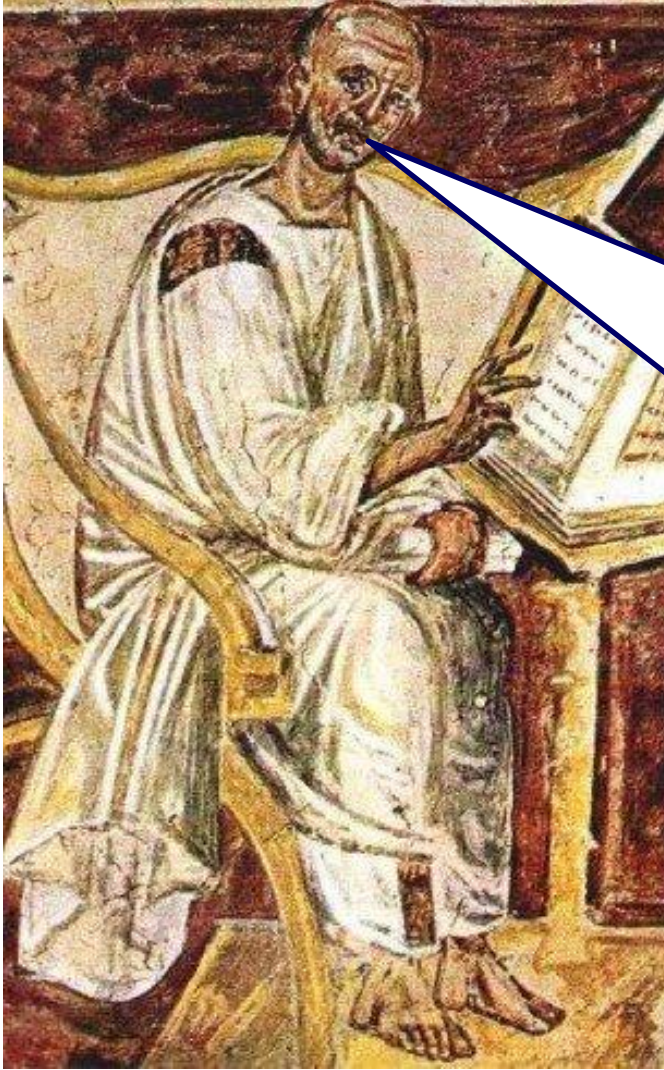
To see why
supernatural
intervention by God
is antecedently
improbable,
we must consider
Natural Theology,
and, specifically,
the Via Negativa.

The Divine Interference Objection

St. Augustine of Hippo said...



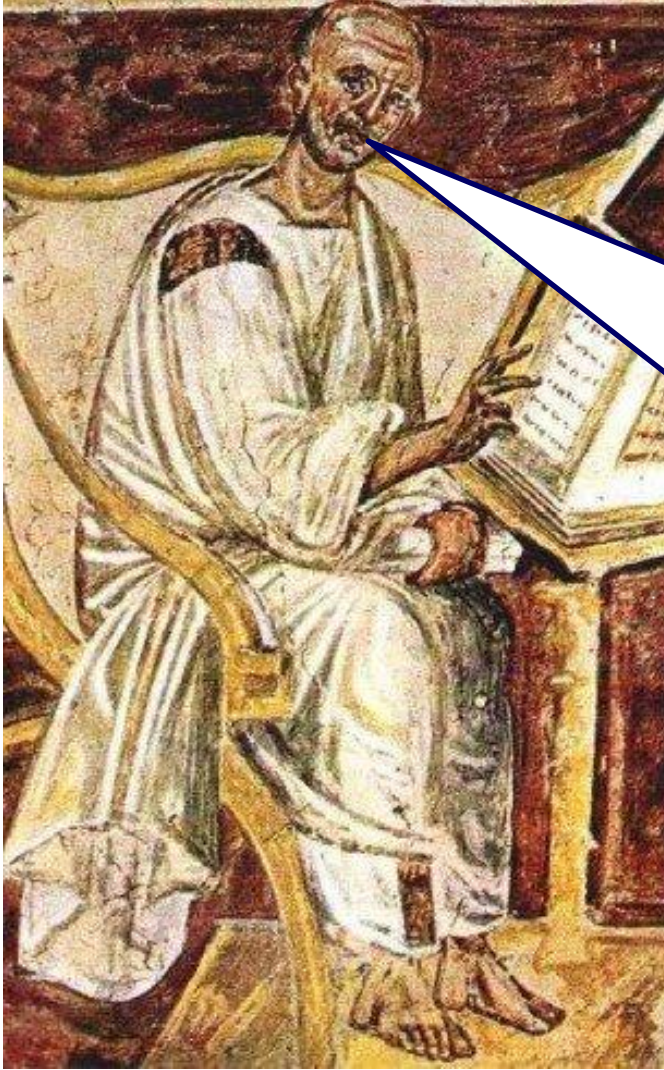
God's Self-Revelation in Nature



*Dei Voluntas
Rerum Natural
Est!*

St. Augustine of Hippo
Civitate Dei, XXI, 8

God's Self-Revelation in Nature



**Nature is
the Will of
God!**

St. Augustine of Hippo
Civitate Dei, XXI, 8

The Divine Interference Objection

And Moses Maimonides
added that we learn
about God through
the Via Negativa,
a.k.a.,
the Way of Negation.



Natural Theology and the Via Negativa



We can learn about
God by seeing what
He is **not**!

Moses Maimonides
Guide for the Perplexed

The Natural Theology/Via Negativa of Supernatural Intervention



God's self-revelation in Nature shows that He has an exceptionally strong tendency not to supernaturally intervene in natural affairs!

The Natural Theology/Via Negativa of Supernatural Intervention



Indeed, God reveals
in everyday
experience and
science that
He possesses an
exceptionally strong
tendency not to
supernaturally raise
the dead!

The Natural Theology/Via Negativa of Supernatural Intervention



Since whatever God wills to happen **must** happen, it follows that the **antecedent probability** that God would **will** Jesus to rise from the dead is **astronomically low**.

The Divine Interference Objection



And, since God is **omnibenevolent**, it follows that He must have **the best of reasons** for **not willing** to supernaturally raise Jesus from the dead!

The Divine Interference Objection



This enables us to
formulate the
following
**Anti-Resurrection
Prior Probability
Argument.**

The Astronomically Low Prior Probability of a Specifically **Supernatural** Resurrection of Jesus by God

The Anti-Resurrection Prior Probability Statistical Syllogism

1. 99.999...999% of the dead are **not** **supernaturally** interfered with by God, and, thus, **not** raised by Him.
2. Jesus was dead.

[Virtually Certain]

3. Jesus was **not** **supernaturally** interfered with by God, and, thus, **not** raised by Him.

$\text{Prob}[j \text{ is not-S} \mid 99.999\% \text{ of } D\text{s are not-Ss \& } j \text{ is } D] = 0.999\%$



The Divine Interference Objection



This is an instance of a standard—and one of the most widely used—argument patterns of Inductive Logic:
Statistical Syllogism.

The Astronomically Low Prior Probability of a Specifically **Supernatural** Resurrection of Jesus by God

The Statistical Syllogism

1. X% of Fs are Gs.

2. a is F.

[X% Probable] =====

3. a is G.

$$\text{Prob}[a \text{ is } G \mid X\% \text{ of } Fs \text{ are } Gs \ \& \ a \text{ is } F] = 0.X$$



The Divine Interference Objection

It's not an appeal to
**observational-relative
frequencies!**

Μὴ γένοιτο!



The Divine Interference Objection



I'll return to
these later on.



The Divine Interference Objection



It's thus clear that
the **prior** probability
of a specifically
supernatural
Resurrection of Jesus
by **God** is
astronomically low!

The Divine Interference Objection

You can't accuse me, as you do Hume, of employing "a far too simplistic manner of determining probability" since my argument is predicated on the existence of an external supernatural agent, namely, God!



The Divine Interference Objection

My argument **isn't** Humean:



David Hume
1711-1776



The Divine Interference Objection

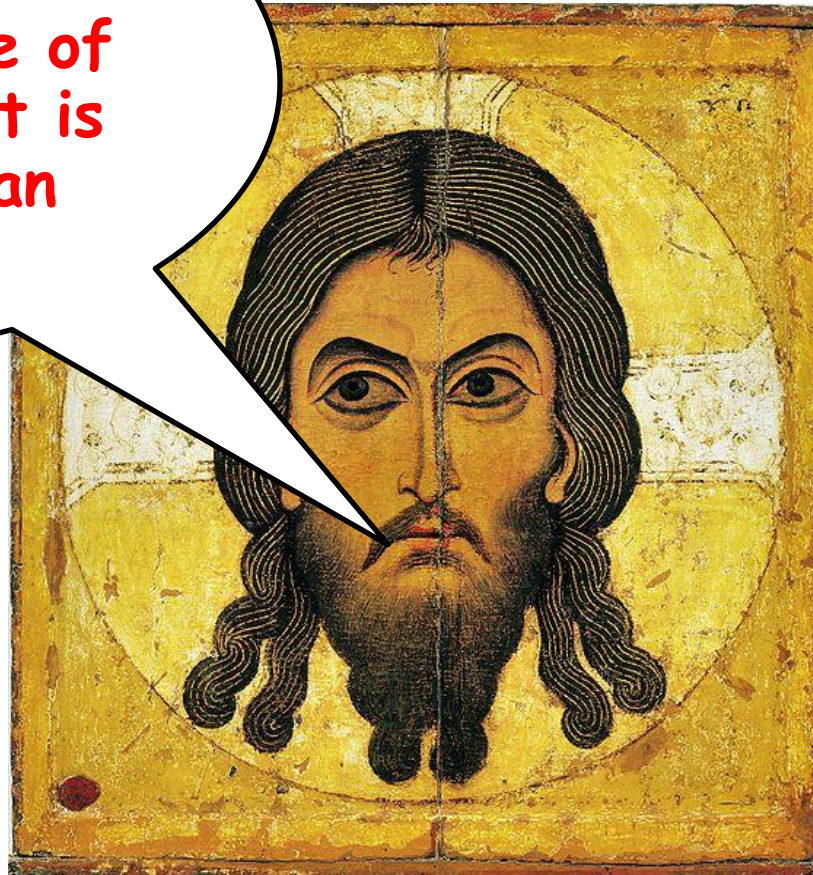
My argument **isn't** Humean:



David Hume
1711-1776

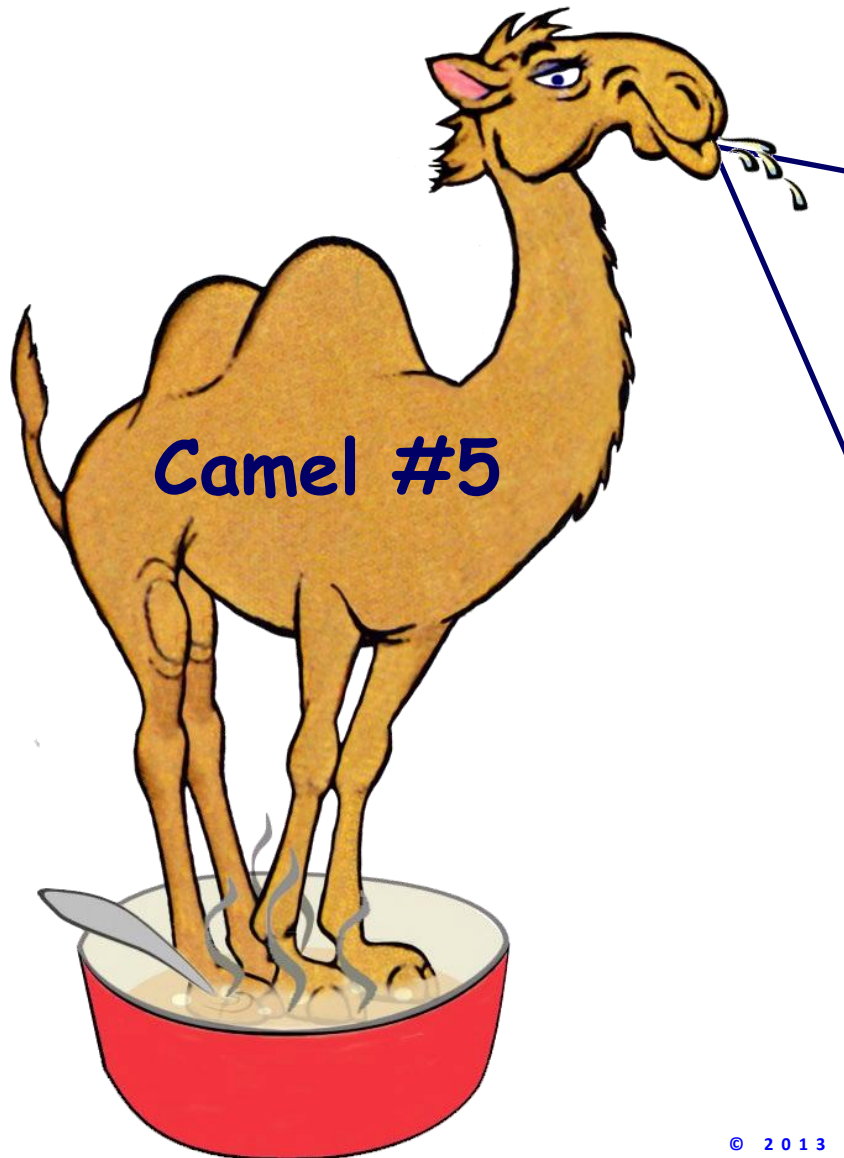


It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than it is for a dead man to rise!



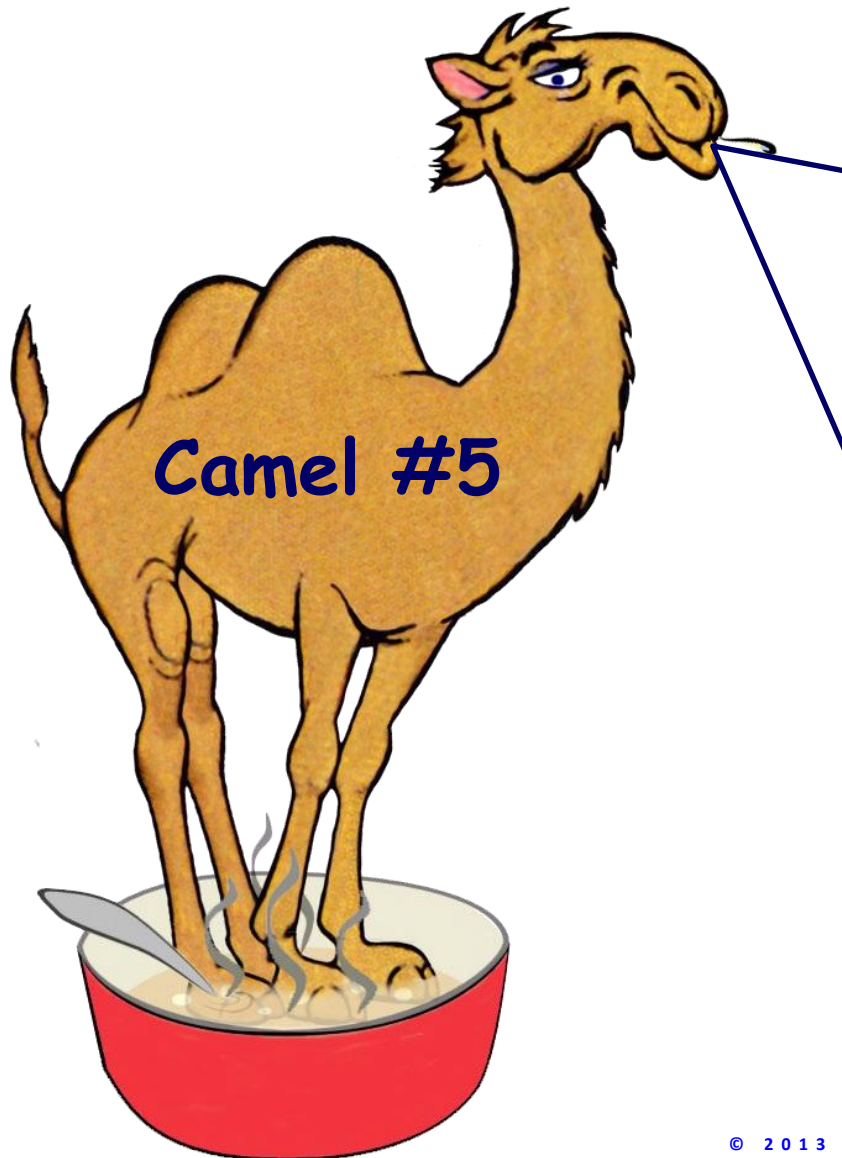
Jesus Christ

The Best Explanation Objection



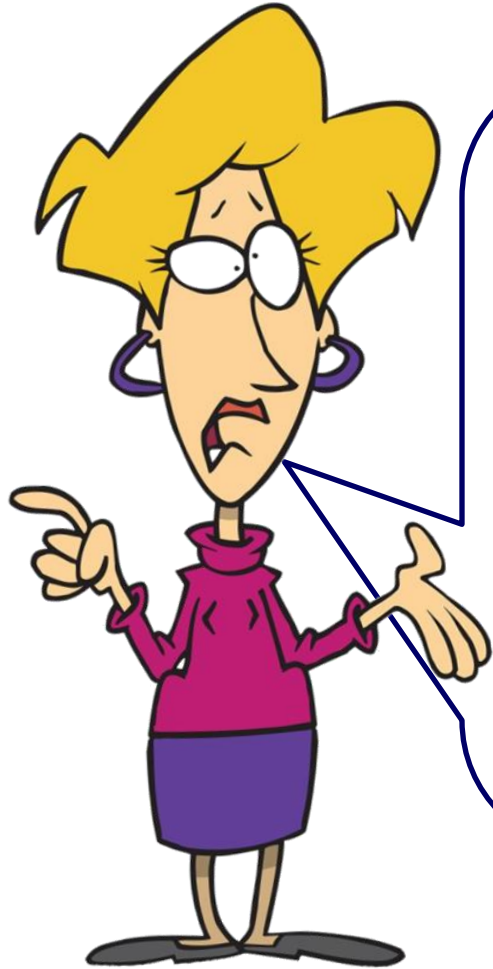
The
Resurrection
Theory is the
best explanation
of the Empty
Tomb and
Postmortem
Appearances of
Jesus

The Best Explanation Objection



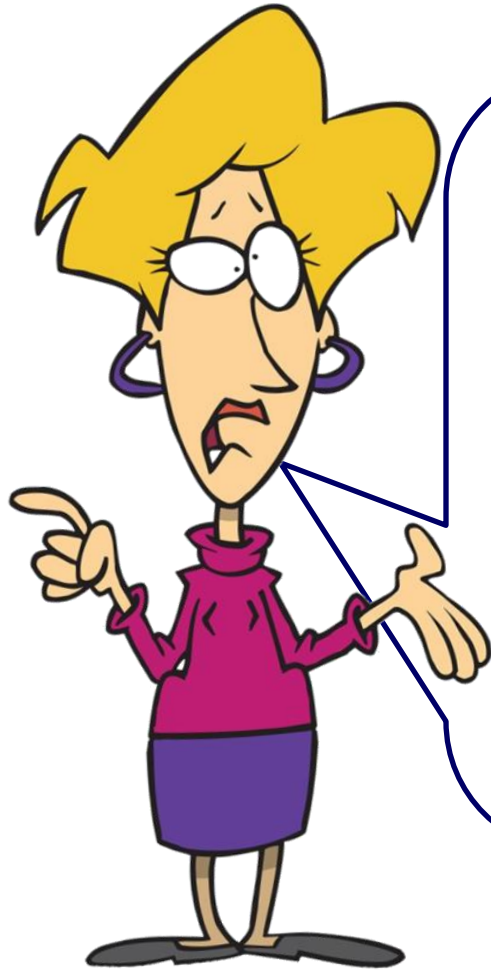
The
Resurrection
Theory is the
best explanation
of the Empty
Tomb and
Postmortem
Appearances of
Jesus

The Best Explanation Objection



**There are four
major problems
here!**

The Best Explanation Objection



First, as defined by
Licona,
the Resurrection Theory
becomes a
Viciously Circular
"Explanation"!

The Best Explanation Objection



Suppose we ask:

Why did individuals and groups, both friends and foes, experience appearances in objective visions or within ordinary vision of Jesus in his bodily raised corpse?

The Best Explanation Objection



**And suppose
we are told...**

The Best Explanation Objection

That's simple!

I explain the fact that
these people experienced
these appearances of Jesus
by means of
the Resurrection Hypothesis
—which I hereby **explicitly**
define as the hypothesis
that
these people experienced
these appearances of Jesus!

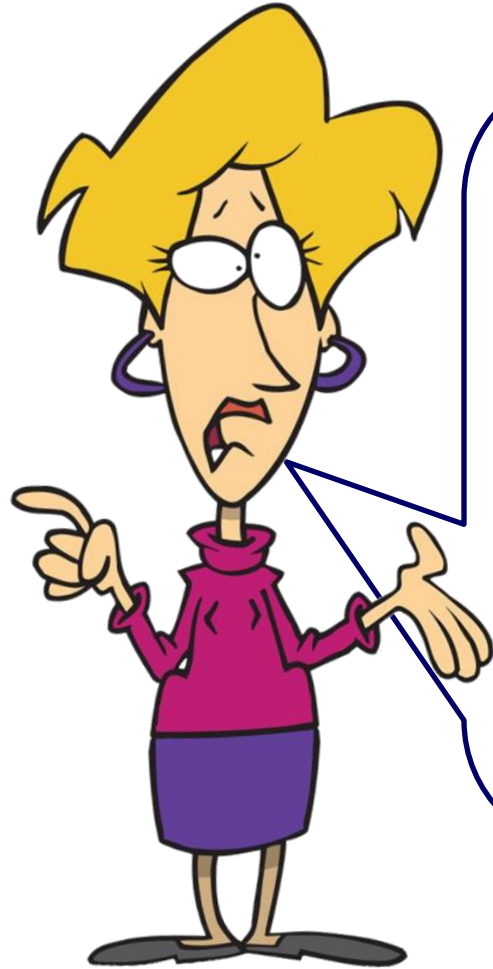


The Best Explanation Objection



We'd flatly reject
this as
a viciously circular
"explanation"!

The Best Explanation Objection



Yet Licona gives
this exact
"explanation"
in his book!

Licona defines the Resurrection Theory in terms of the postmortem appearances of Jesus
—thus rendering it a **viciously circular** explanation!



I herein define the resurrection hypothesis as follows:

*Following a supernatural event of an indeterminate nature and cause, **Jesus appeared to a number of people**, in individual and group settings and to friends and foes, **in no less than an objective vision and perhaps within ordinary vision in his bodily raised corpse.***

(TROJ: 582-583)

The Best Explanation Objection



The moral, of course,
is that it is **illogical**
to define
the Resurrection
Hypothesis
in terms of
**the historical facts that
it needs to explain!**

The Best Explanation Objection



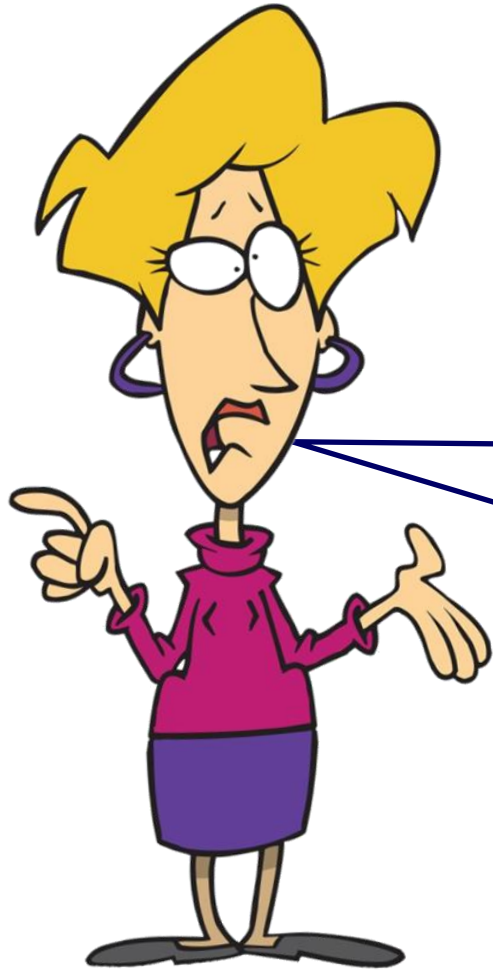
**This leads to the
second problem for
the Resurrection
Theory!**

The Best Explanation Objection



When it is no longer
defined as
a circular explanation,
the Resurrection
Hypothesis
lacks both
explanatory scope
and
explanatory power!

The Best Explanation Objection

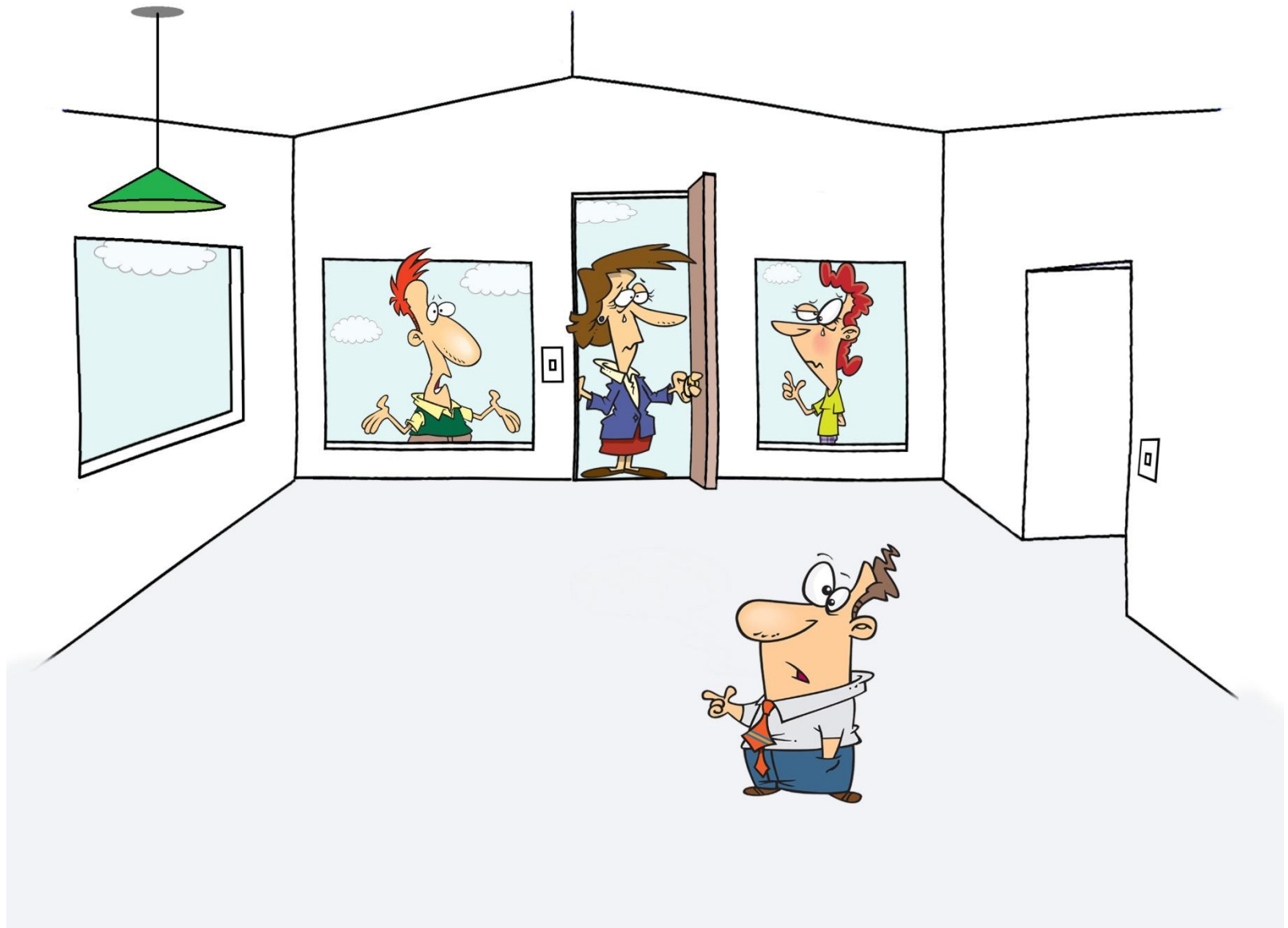


To see this,
consider...

The Parable of Mr. Jones

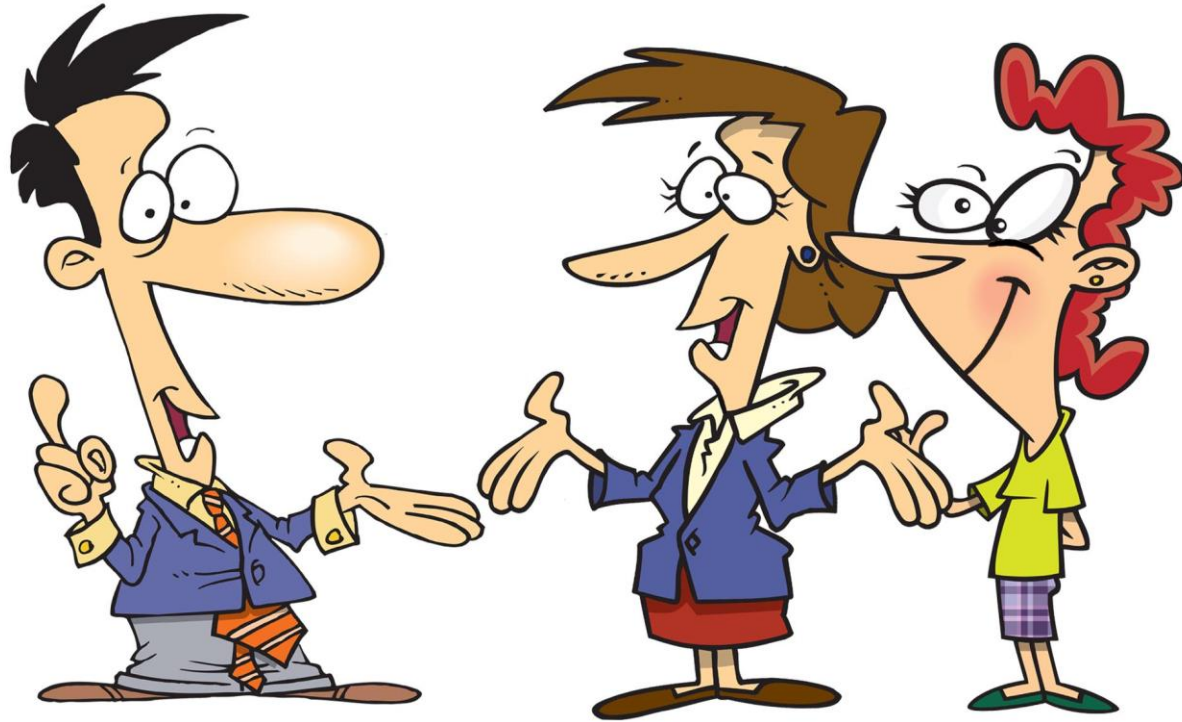


Suppose...



Jones' house is found empty by Peter, John, and the two Marys.

But
later that
morning...



Jones is seen by the two Marys.

And
later that
day...



Jones is seen at the club by his employees.

And
three years
later...

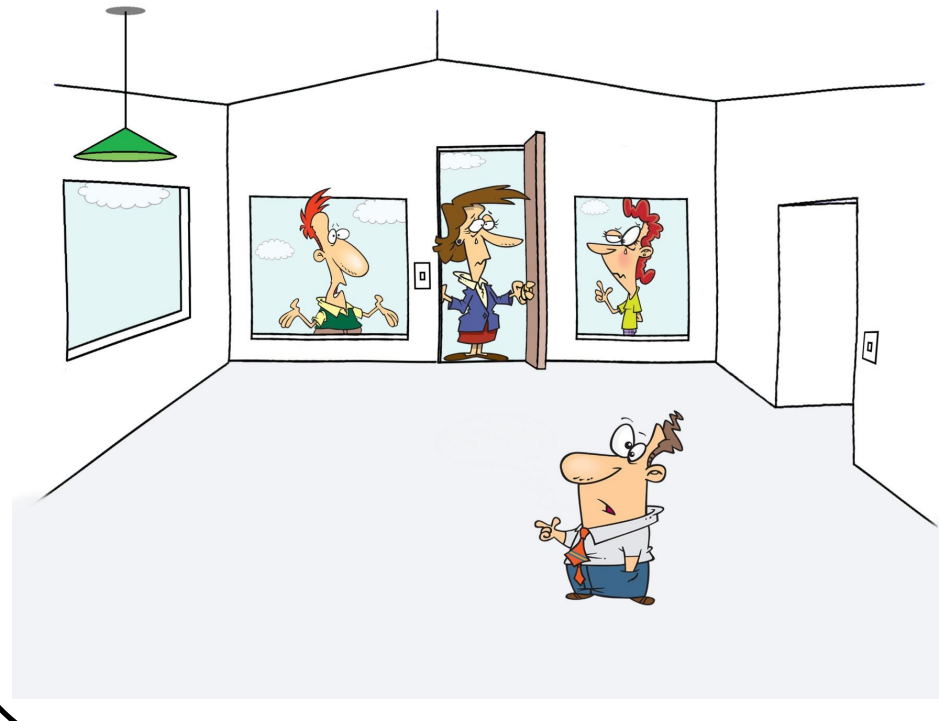


Jones is seen up in the clouds skydiving.

So now
suppose we
ask...



Why was Jones' house found empty?

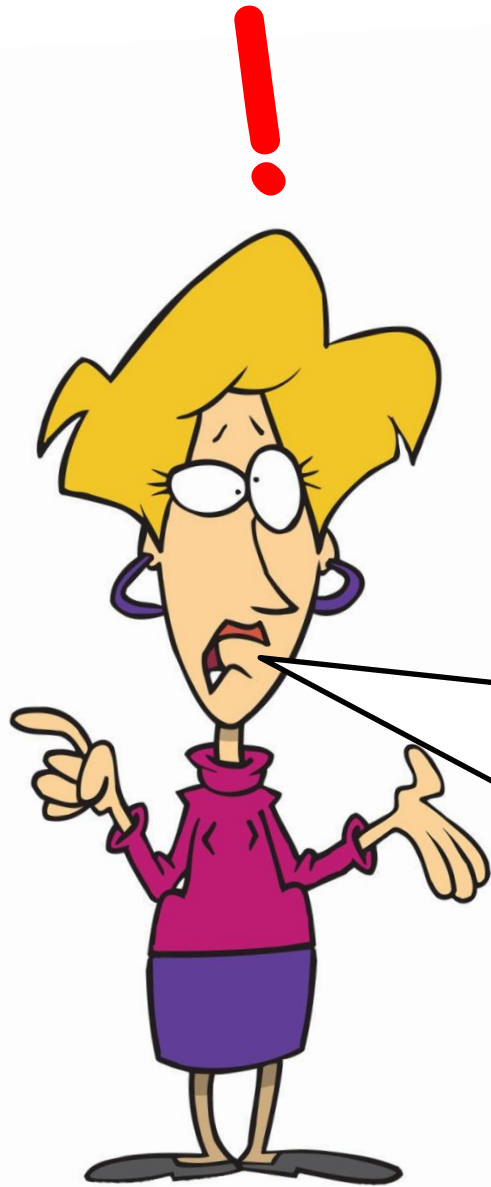


And we
are told...

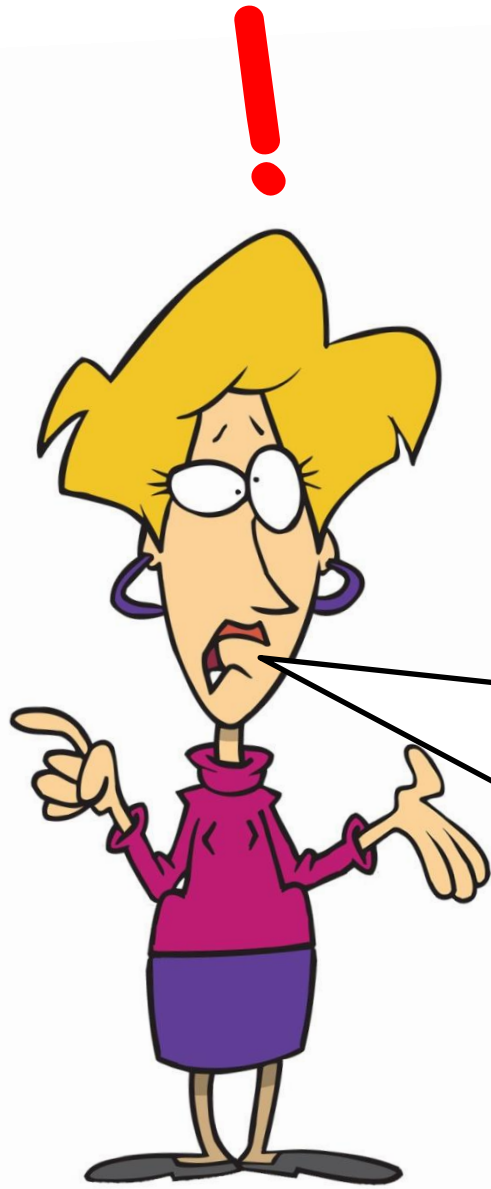
That's simple!
It's because
Jones woke up!



We'd all say...



Sure, Jones had
to wake up.
But that's
no explanation
of why his house
was found empty!



To explain that
we'd need to
suppose that
Jones left his
house!

Suppose we
now ask...



Why was Jones
seen by
the two Marys?

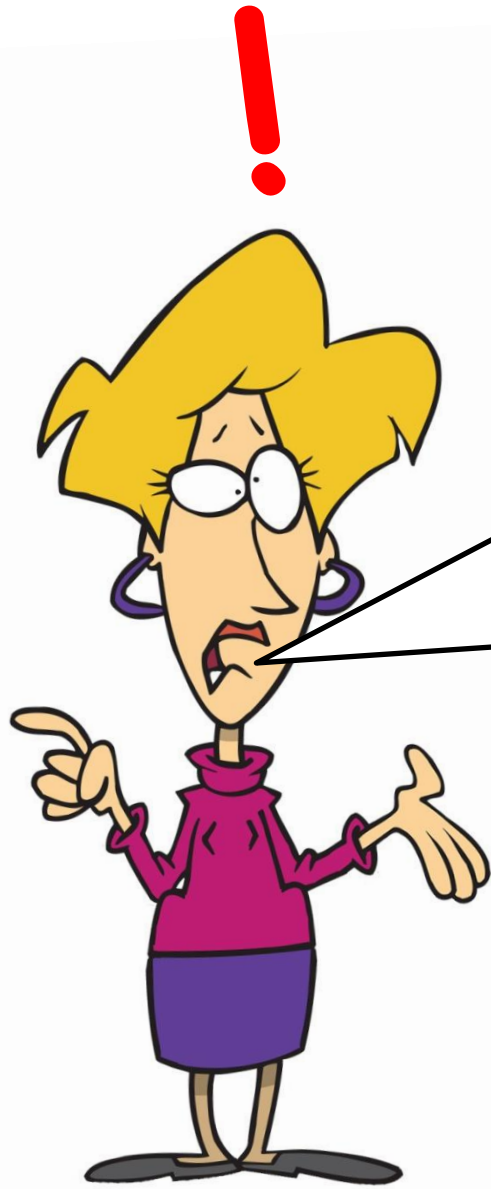


and are
told...

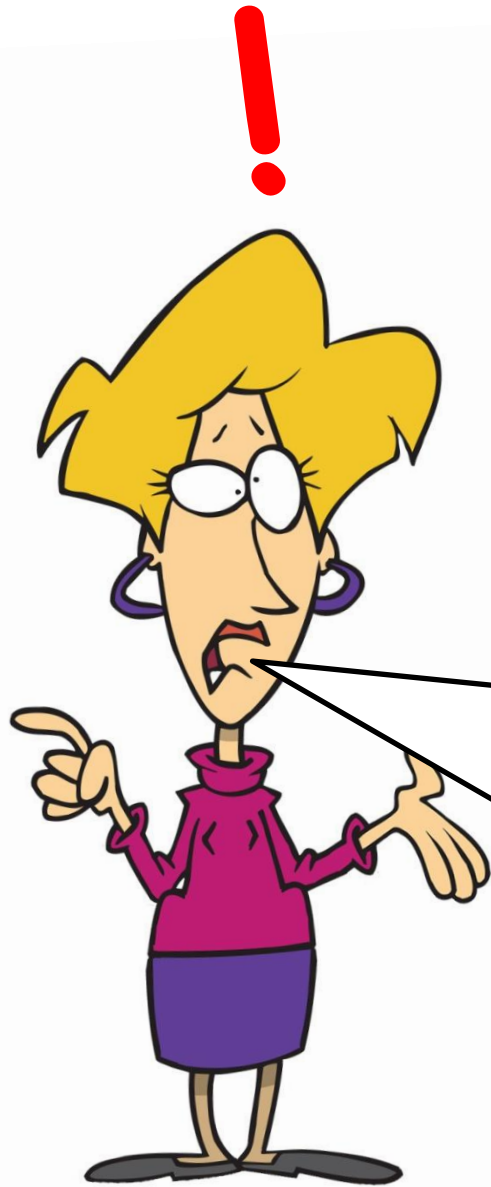
That's easy!
It's because
Jones woke up!



We'd all say...



**That's a
lame
explanation!**



To explain why
Jones was seen
by the two Marys
we'd have to
suppose he
encountered
them!

Suppose we
now ask...



Why was Jones
seen by
his employees?

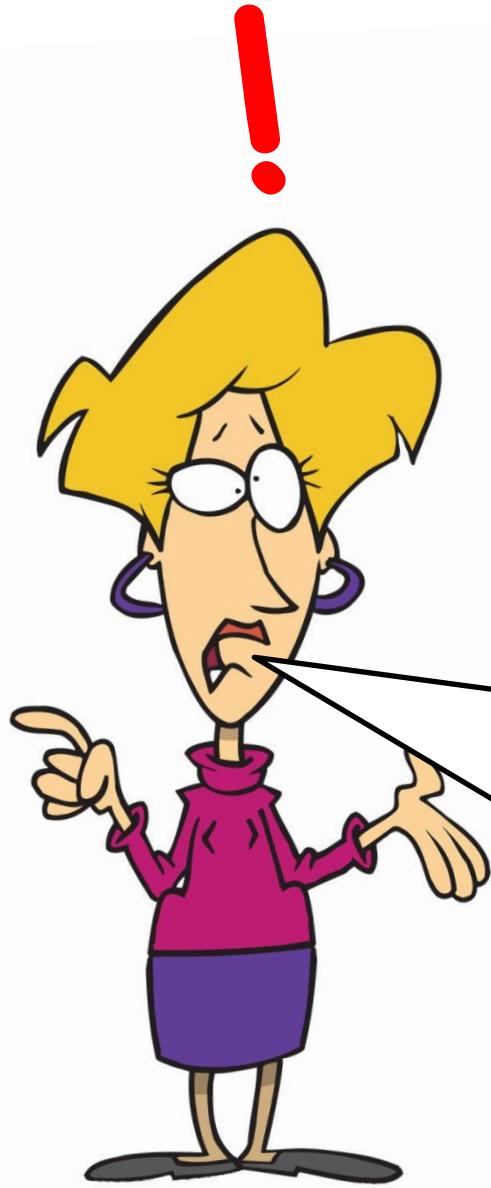


and are given
the answer...

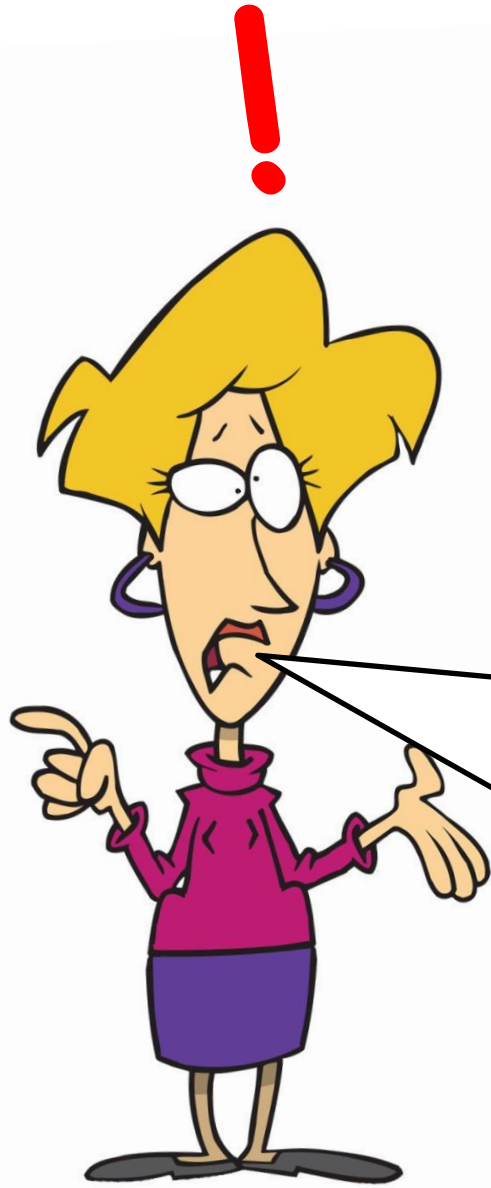
That's a snap!
It's because
Jones woke up!



We'd all say...



**That's a
bogus
explanation!**



To explain that
we'd have to
assume that
Jones
encountered his
employees at
the club!

Suppose we
now ask...



Why was Jones
seen skydiving
three years
later?



and are given
the answer...

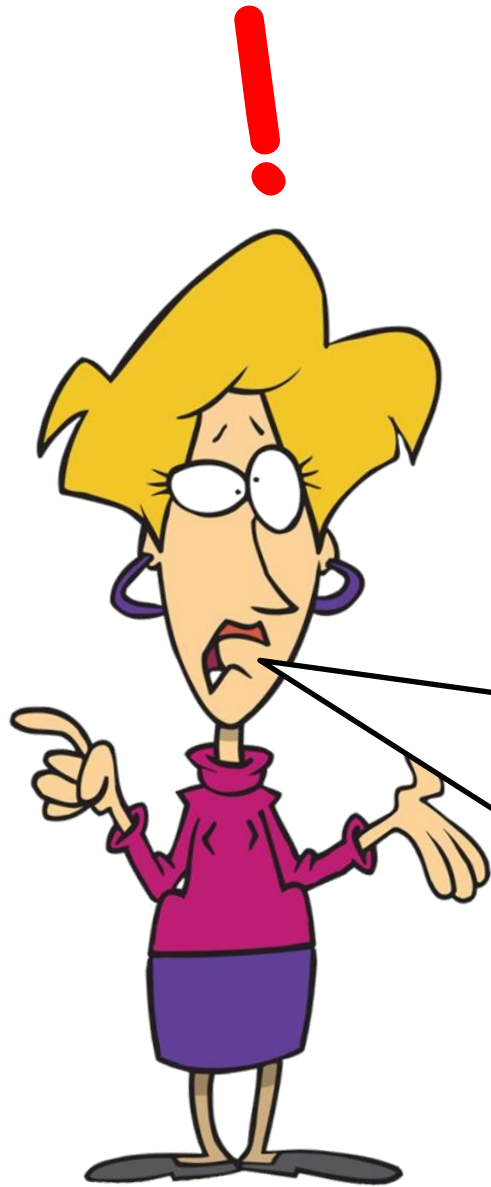
That's obvious!
It's because
Jones woke up!



We'd all agree...



**That's a
ridiculous
"explanation"!**



What we'd
have to suppose
here is that
Jones jumped out
of an airplane
three years later!

But now
suppose what really
happened three years
later was that ...



Jones was seen floating above the clouds of "Heaven" in resplendent glory!

We would
surely ask...



**Why was Jones
seen floating above
the clouds in glory?**

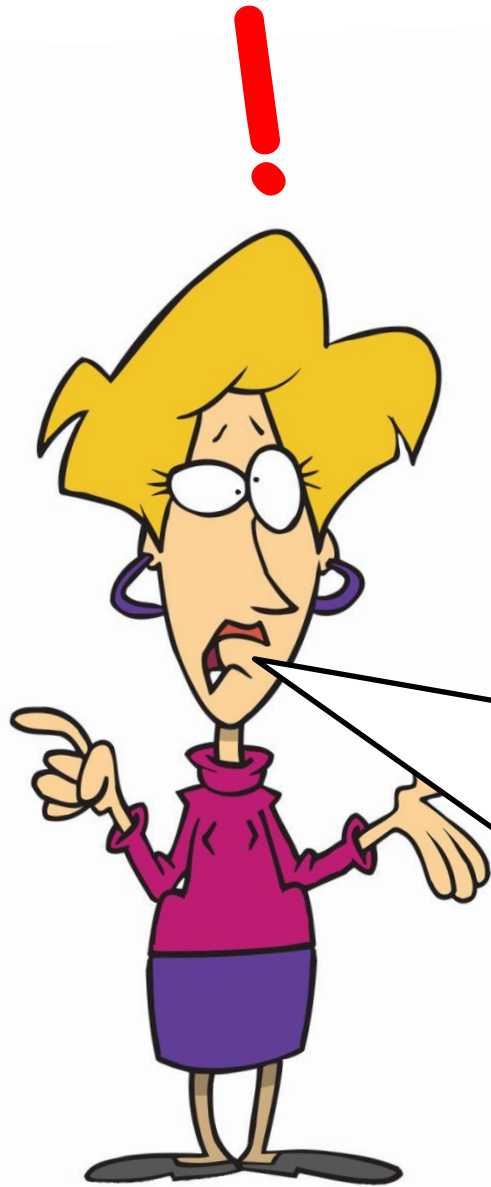


If we
were told...

That's simple!
It's because
Jones woke up!



We'd reject this
as absolutely
preposterous!



Getting out of
bed **cannot**
explain
Jones' floating
above the clouds
in glory **three**
years later!

Moral of the Parable



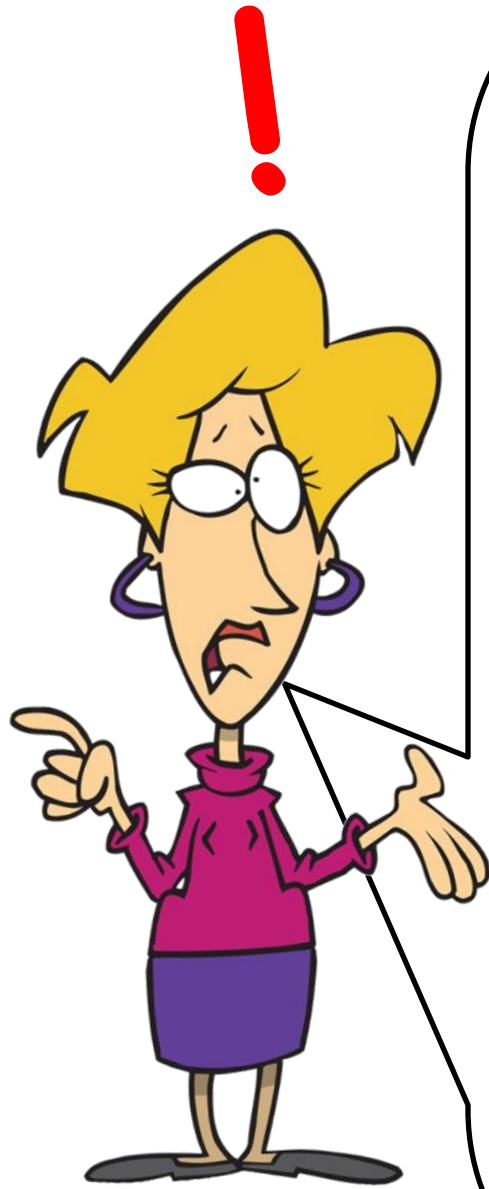
The hypothesis that
Jesus rose from the
dead can **no more**
explain the empty
tomb and
postmortem
appearances...



...than the hypothesis that Jones rose from his bed **can explain** his empty house and later appearances!



To explain
the empty tomb and
the postmortem
appearances requires
appeal, **not** to
the Resurrection
itself, but to the
postmortem activities
of Jesus!



For example, just to explain the "heavenly" appearance of Jesus to Paul, we'd need to add two supplementary assumptions:

Jesus somehow ascended "up" into "Heaven" (wherever that is)!

Jesus somehow acquired the power to know what was going on "down" on earth and to create visions of himself in "heavenly" glory!

The Best Explanation Objection



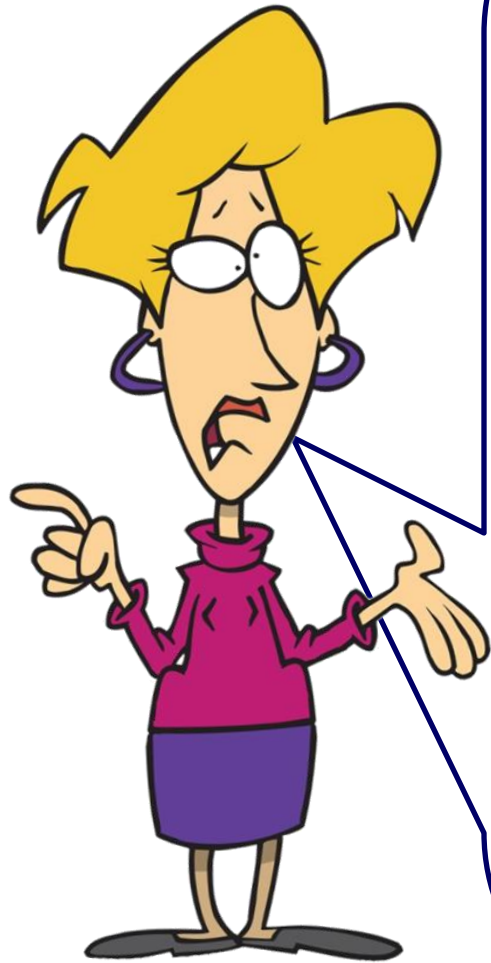
Thus we can see that,
left to its own devices,
the Resurrection
Hypothesis
lacks both
explanatory scope
and
explanatory power!

The Best Explanation Objection



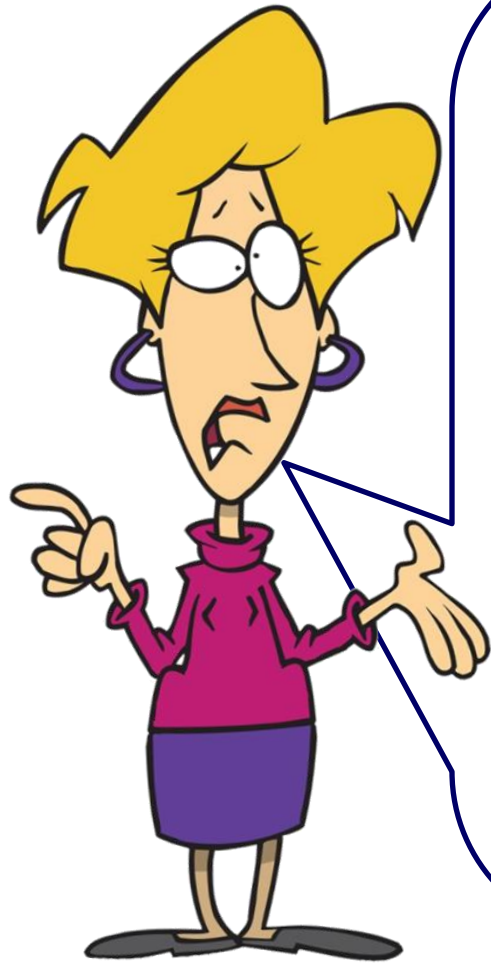
This leads to the
third problem for
the Resurrection
Theory!

The Best Explanation Objection



The Resurrection Hypothesis is **highly ad hoc** because it must be supplemented by **dubious assumptions** regarding the **postmortem** activities of Jesus that it doesn't imply and **aren't implied** by our existing knowledge.

The Best Explanation Objection



These assumptions include, the Ascension, the ability to pass through solid matter and to appear and disappear at will, telepathy, clairvoyance, and the power to create "heavenly" visions of glory!

The Best Explanation Objection



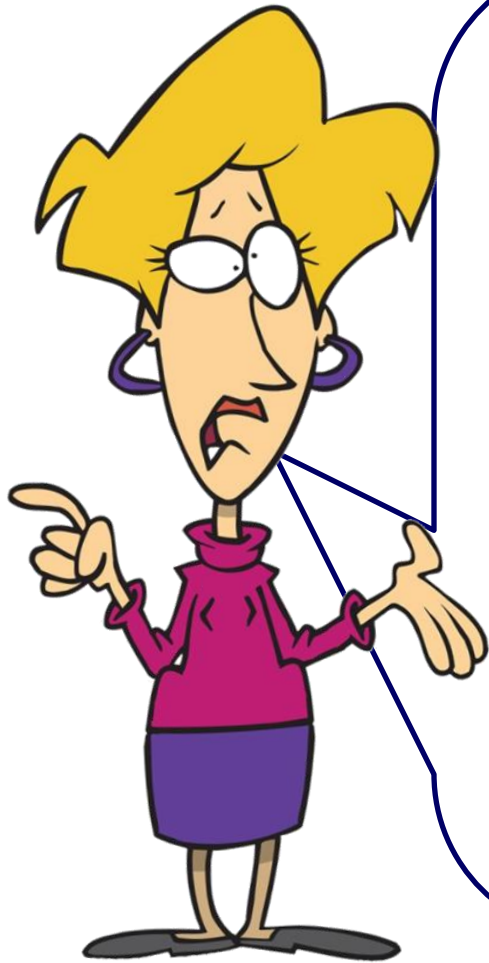
This leads to the fourth and most pressing problem for the Resurrection Theory!

The Best Explanation Objection



Atoms
or
Schmatoms
?

The Best Explanation Objection



Let's reconsider
Licona's definition of
the Resurrection Hypothesis
—but now stripped of those
elements that render it a
viciously circular
explanation:

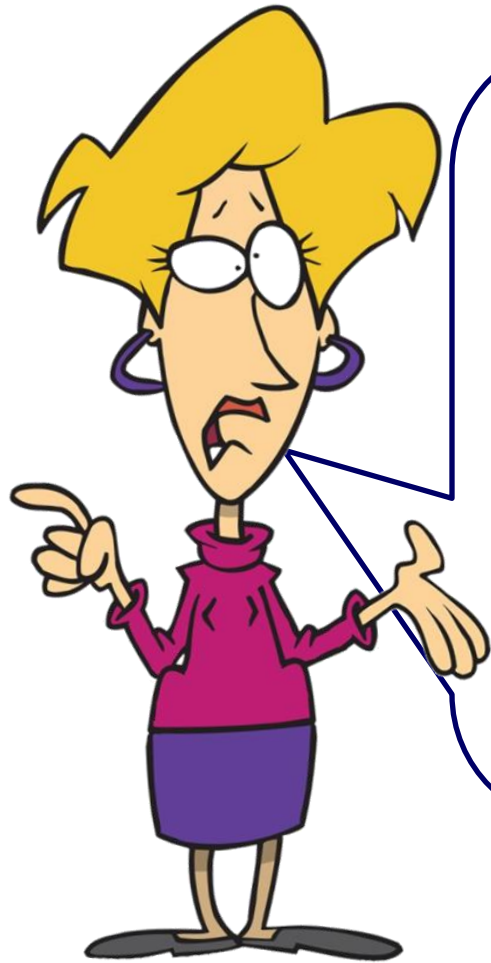
The Best Explanation Objection



~~I herein define the resurrection hypothesis as follows:~~

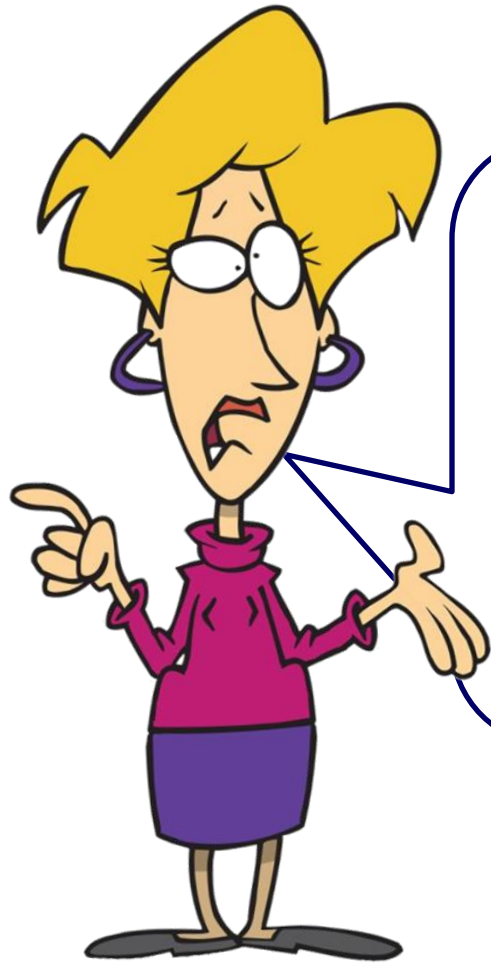
~~***Following a supernatural event of an indeterminate nature and cause, [involving] Jesus [as a] appeared to a number of people, in individual and group settings and to friends and foes, in no less than an objective vision and perhaps within ordinary vision in his bodily raised corpse.***~~

The Best Explanation Objection



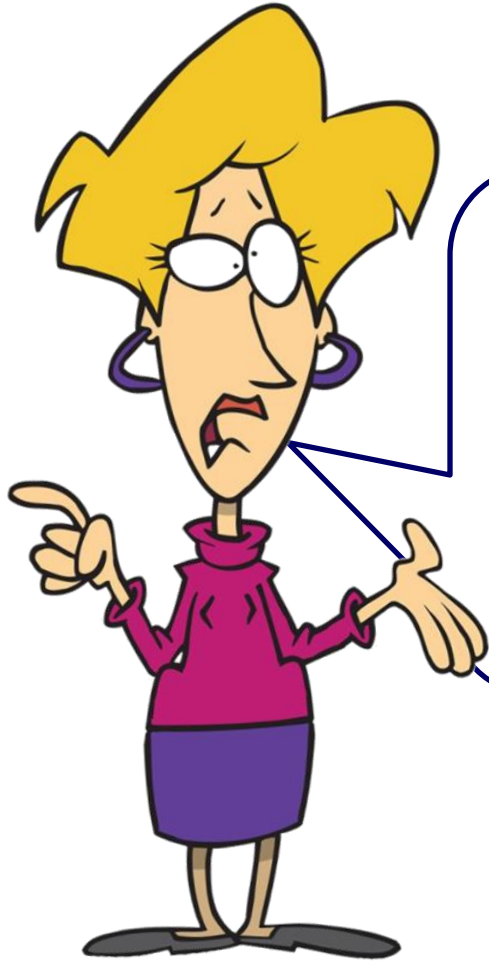
The problem now
becomes the
"indeterminate nature"
of the Risen Jesus.

The Best Explanation Objection



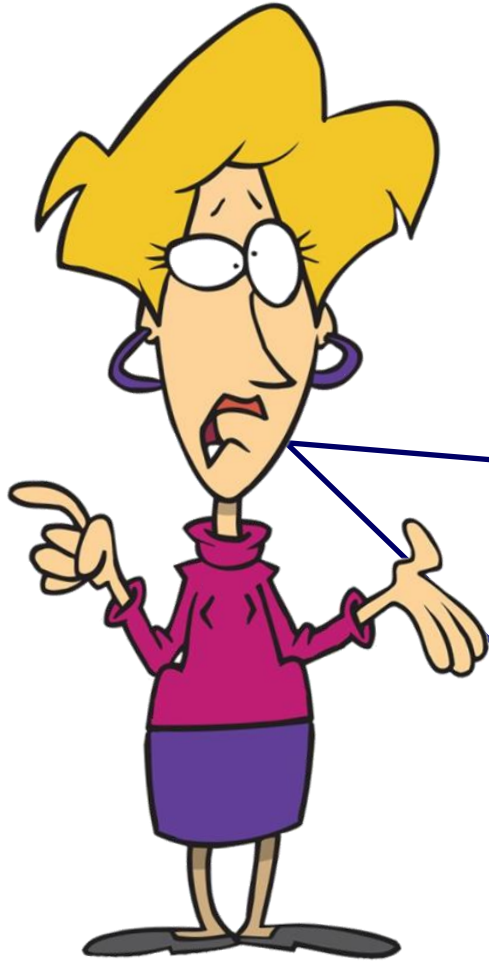
This "indeterminate nature" makes the Risen Jesus into into a veritable "unknown": the true "X-Man"!

The Best Explanation Objection



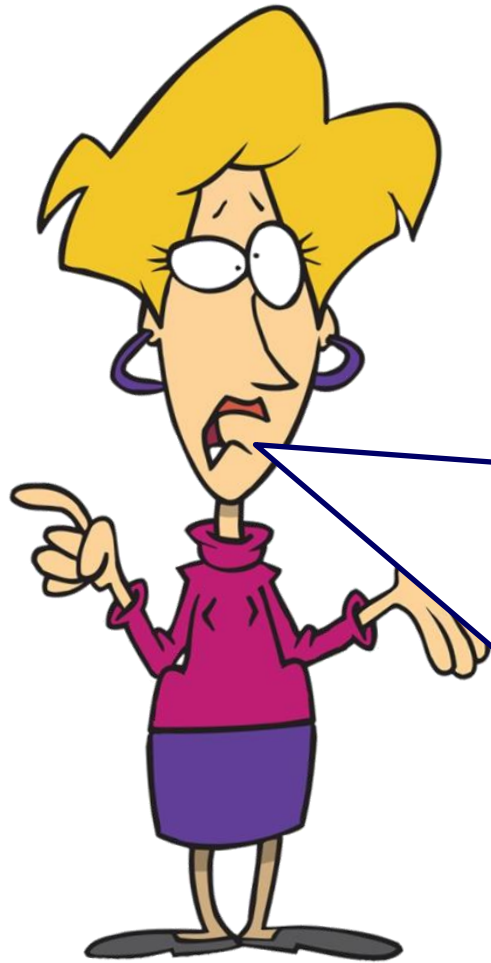
Is this
indeterminate "X-Man"
composed of atoms?

The Best Explanation Objection



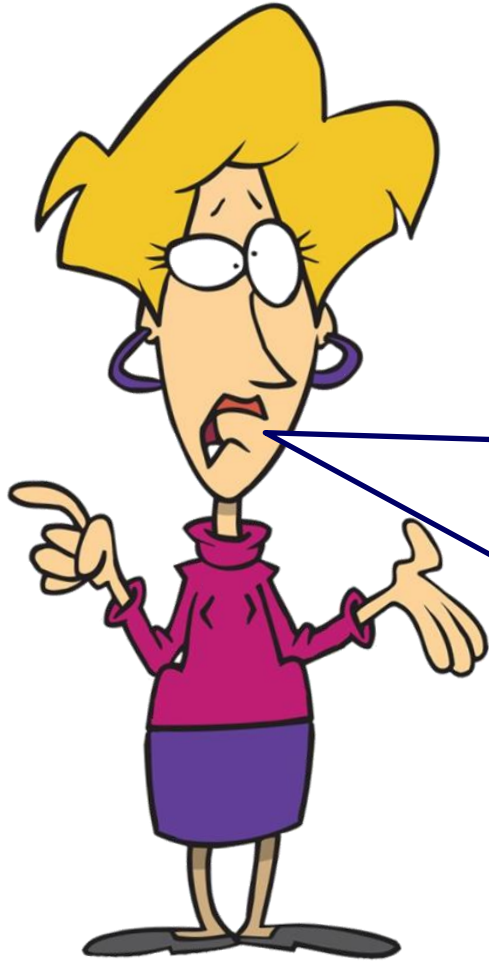
Or is "he" composed
of some unknown
something else
that, for lack of a
better term, we can
just call
"schmatoms"?

The Best Explanation Objection

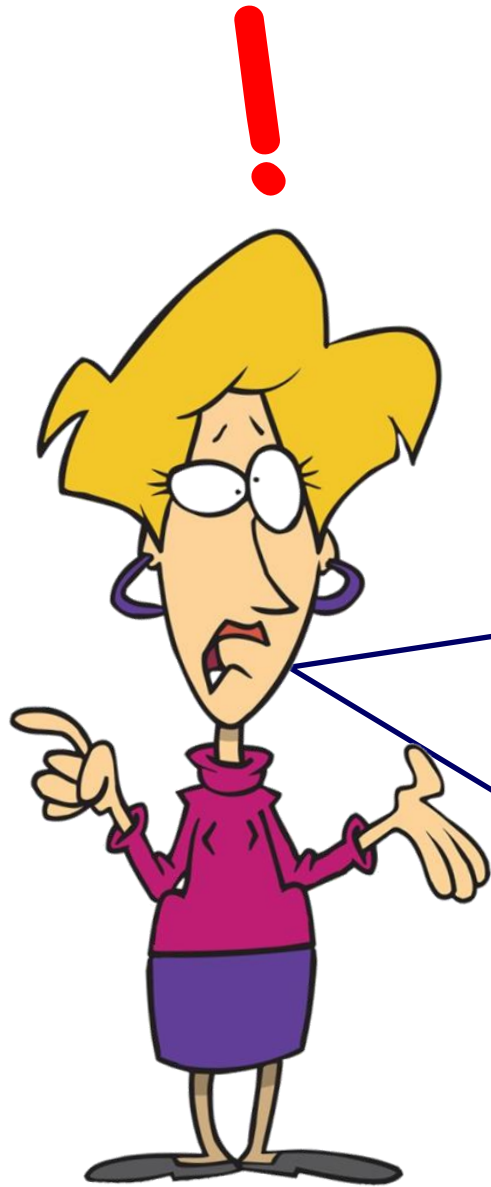


How can
an indeterminate,
an unknown "X",
explain any
historical facts?

The Best Explanation Objection



Obviously,
it can't!



It is clear, then, that
the resurrectionists'
"X-Man" Hypothesis
faces the following
"Atoms or Schmatoms"
Explanatory Dilemma!

The
"X-Man":
is
he

Atoms
or
Schmatoms?!

The "Atoms or Schmatoms" Explanatory Dilemma

Jesus
Rose
from
the
Dead

Empty Tomb
Appearance to
the Women
Appearance to
the Disciples
Appearance to
Paul

The "Atoms or Schmatoms" Explanatory Dilemma

Jesus
Rose
from
the
Dead

It is claimed the Resurrection can explain these facts!

Empty Tomb
Appearance to
the Women
Appearance to
the Disciples
Appearance to
Paul

The "Atoms or Schmatoms" Explanatory Dilemma

Jesus
Rose
from
the
Dead

Yet the question Resurrectionists can't answer is "How"?

Empty Tomb
Appearance to
the Women
Appearance to
the Disciples
Appearance to
Paul

The "Atoms or Schmatoms" Explanatory Dilemma

Jesus
Rose
from
the
Dead

There are only two possibilities—and both fail!

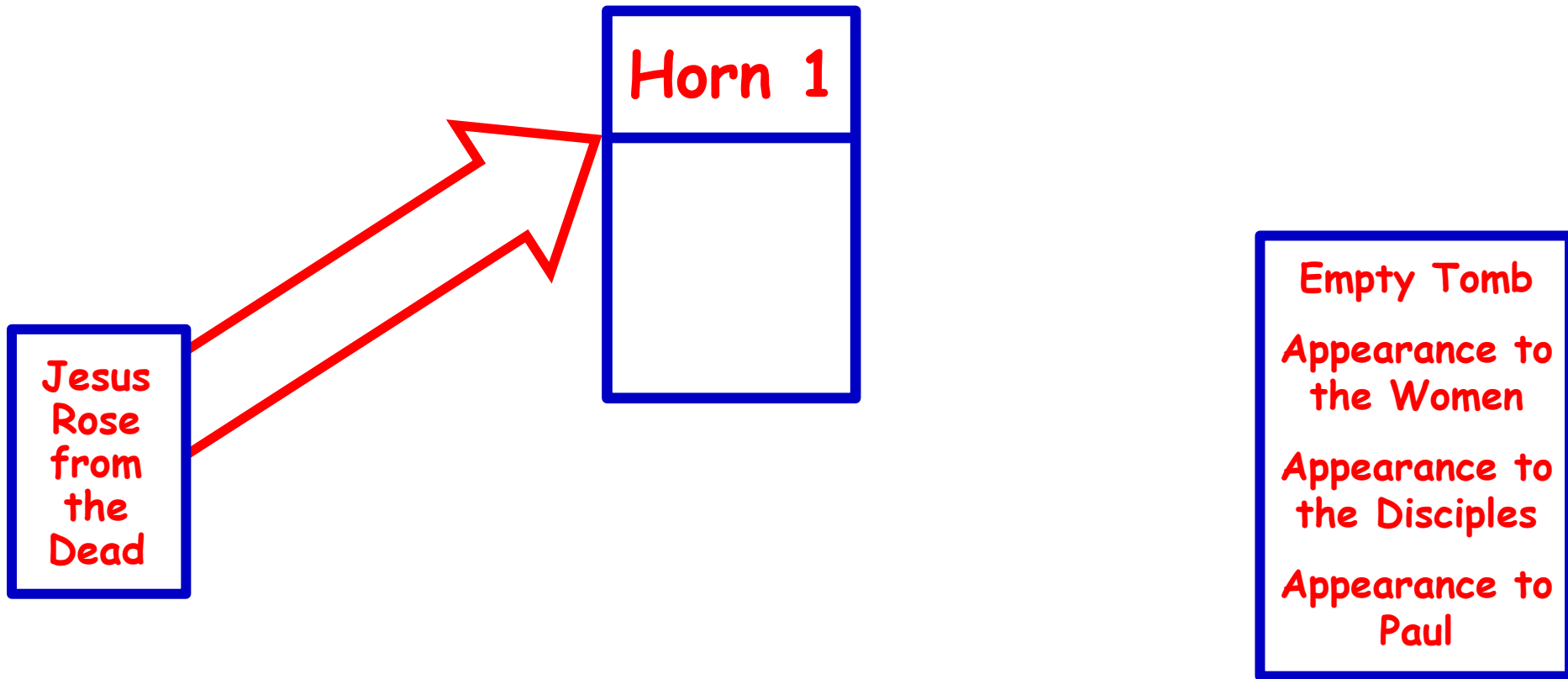
Empty Tomb
Appearance to
the Women
Appearance to
the Disciples
Appearance to
Paul

The "Atoms or Schmatoms" Explanatory Dilemma

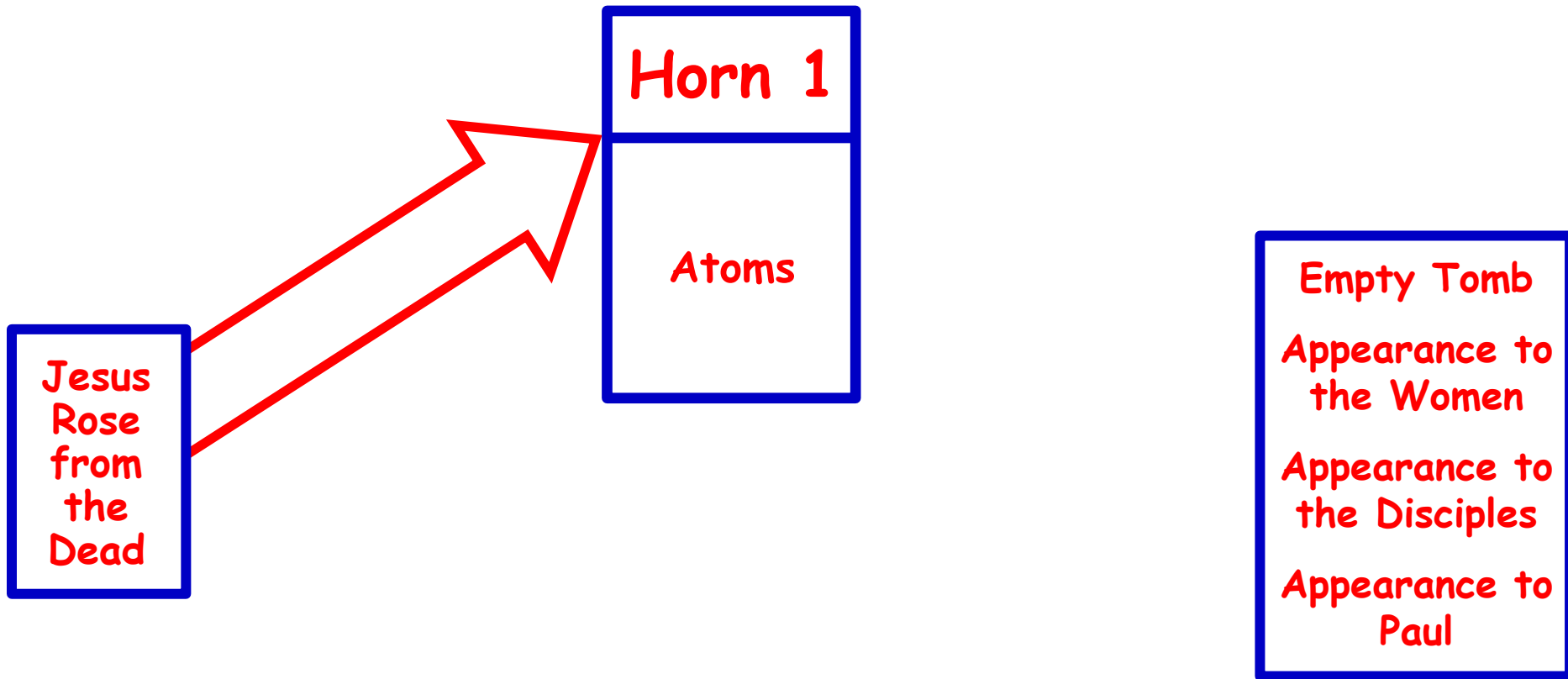
Jesus
Rose
from
the
Dead

Empty Tomb
Appearance to
the Women
Appearance to
the Disciples
Appearance to
Paul

The "Atoms or Schmatoms" Explanatory Dilemma



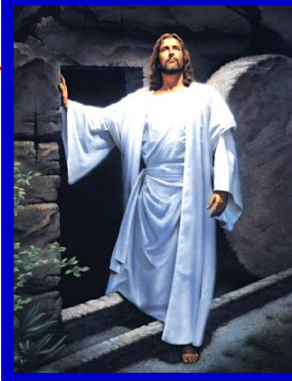
The "Atoms or Schmatoms" Explanatory Dilemma



The "Atoms or Schmatoms" Explanatory Dilemma

Jesus
Rose
from
the
Dead

Atoms



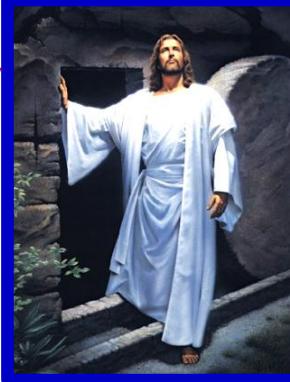
On the Positive Side:

Empty Tomb
Appearance to
the Women
Appearance to
the Disciples
Appearance to
Paul

The "Atoms or Schmatoms" Explanatory Dilemma

Jesus
Rose
from
the
Dead

Atoms

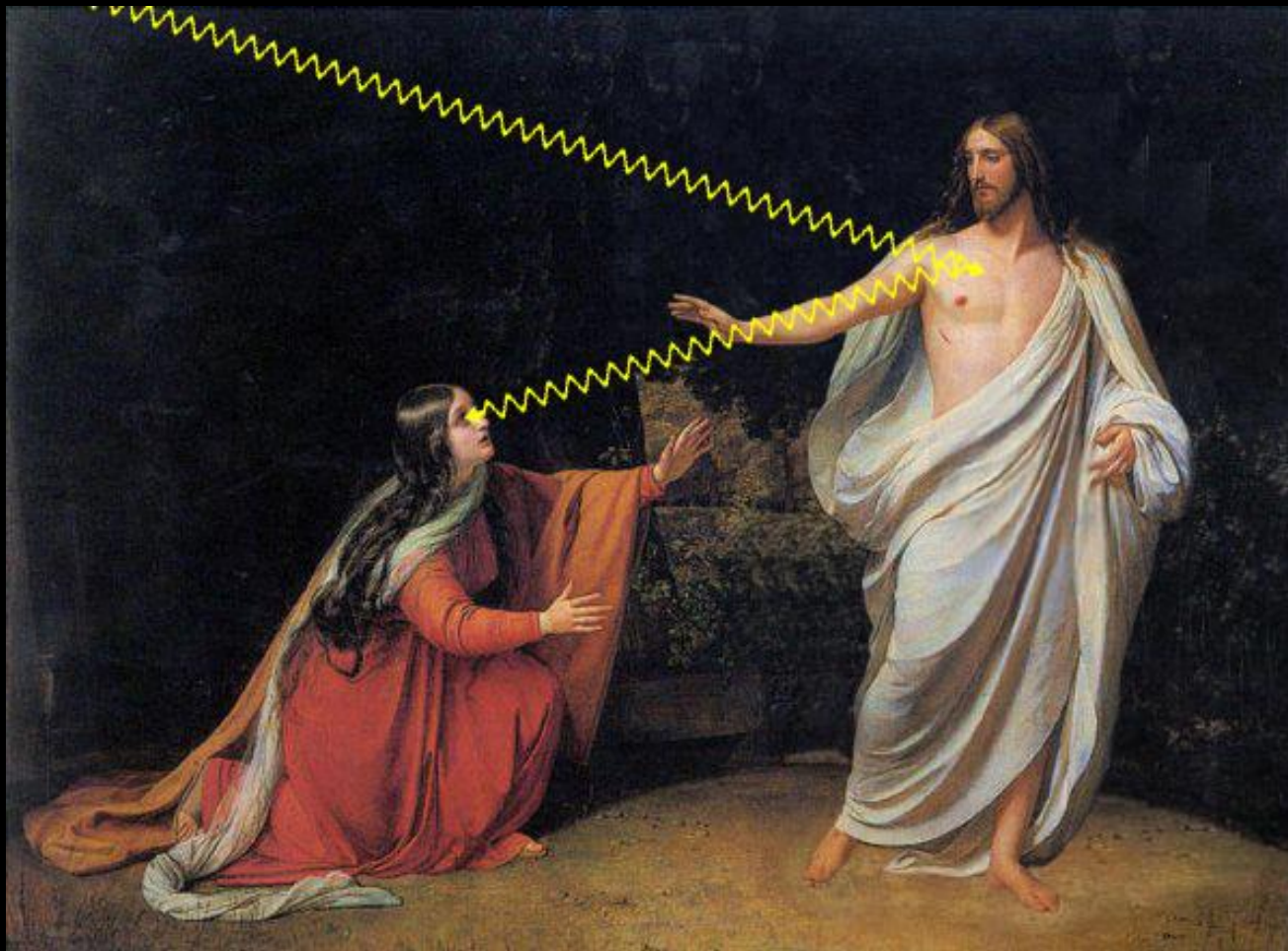


On the Positive Side:

Can Interact with the Physical World!
Can be Seen, Heard, and Touched!
Can Pick Up and Eat Fish!
Can Move about without Passing through
Other People's Bodies, Floors, and the
Surface of the Earth!

Empty Tomb
Appearance to
the Women
Appearance to
the Disciples
Appearance to
Paul

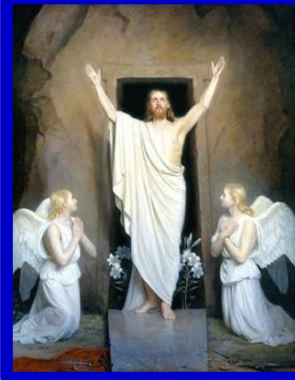
Atom-Jesus can be seen because light is reflected from his body!



The "Atoms or Schmatoms" Explanatory Dilemma

Jesus
Rose
from
the
Dead

Atoms

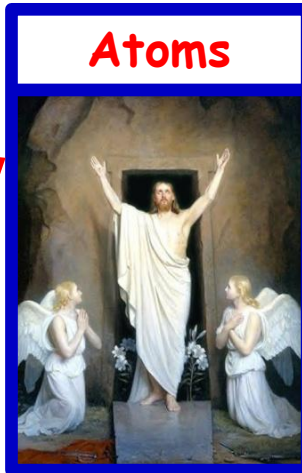


On the Negative Side:

Empty Tomb
Appearance to
the Women
Appearance to
the Disciples
Appearance to
Paul

The "Atoms or Schmatoms" Explanatory Dilemma

Jesus
Rose
from
the
Dead



On the Negative Side:

Physically Weak!

Subject to Disease, Injury, and Aging,
Mortal!

Stuck down on the Earth—no way to
ascend "up" into "Heaven"!

Inglorious!

Fully aware of these limitations!

No triumphant Savior-Messiah!

E.g.: Merely Resuscitated
(Like Lazarus)

Empty Tomb

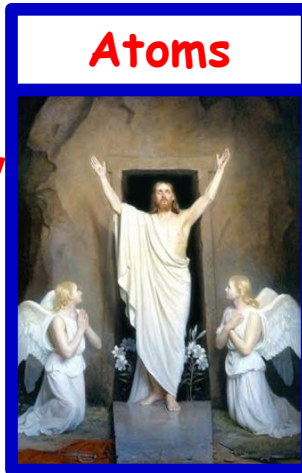
Appearance to
the Women

Appearance to
the Disciples

Appearance to
Paul

The "Atoms or Schmatoms" Explanatory Dilemma

Jesus
Rose
from
the
Dead



Very Weak Explanation!

Empty Tomb
Appearance to
the Women
Appearance to
the Disciples
Appearance to
Paul

On the Negative Side:

Physically Weak!

Subject to Disease, Injury, and Aging,
Mortal!

Stuck down on the Earth—no way to
ascend "up" into "Heaven"!

Inglorious!

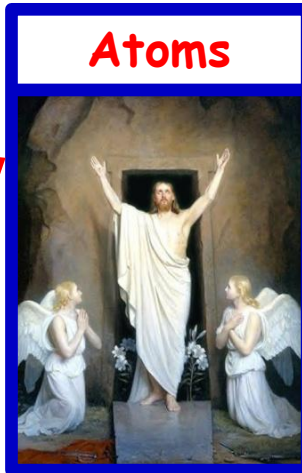
Fully aware of these limitations!

No triumphant Savior-Messiah!

E.g.: Merely Resuscitated
(Like Lazarus)

The "Atoms or Schmatoms" Explanatory Dilemma

Jesus
Rose
from
the
Dead

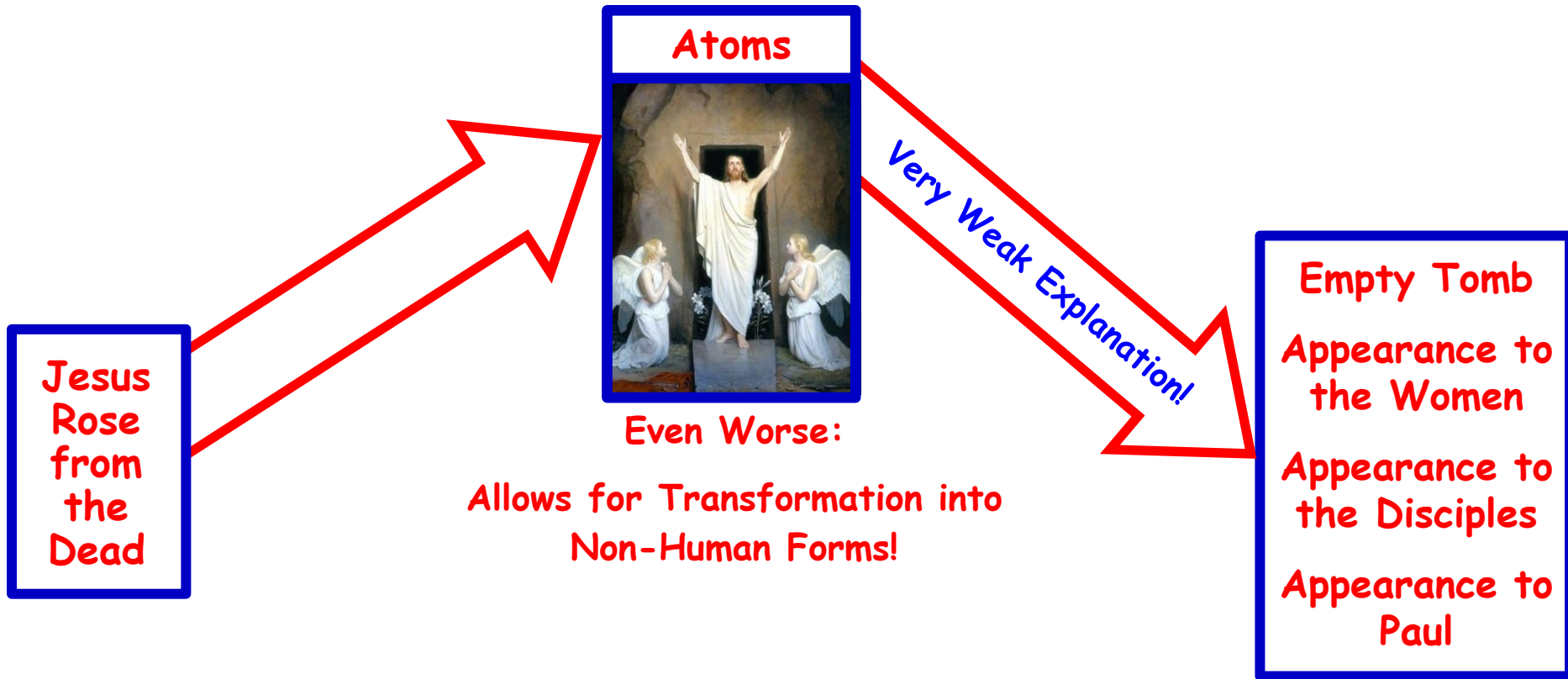


Even Worse:

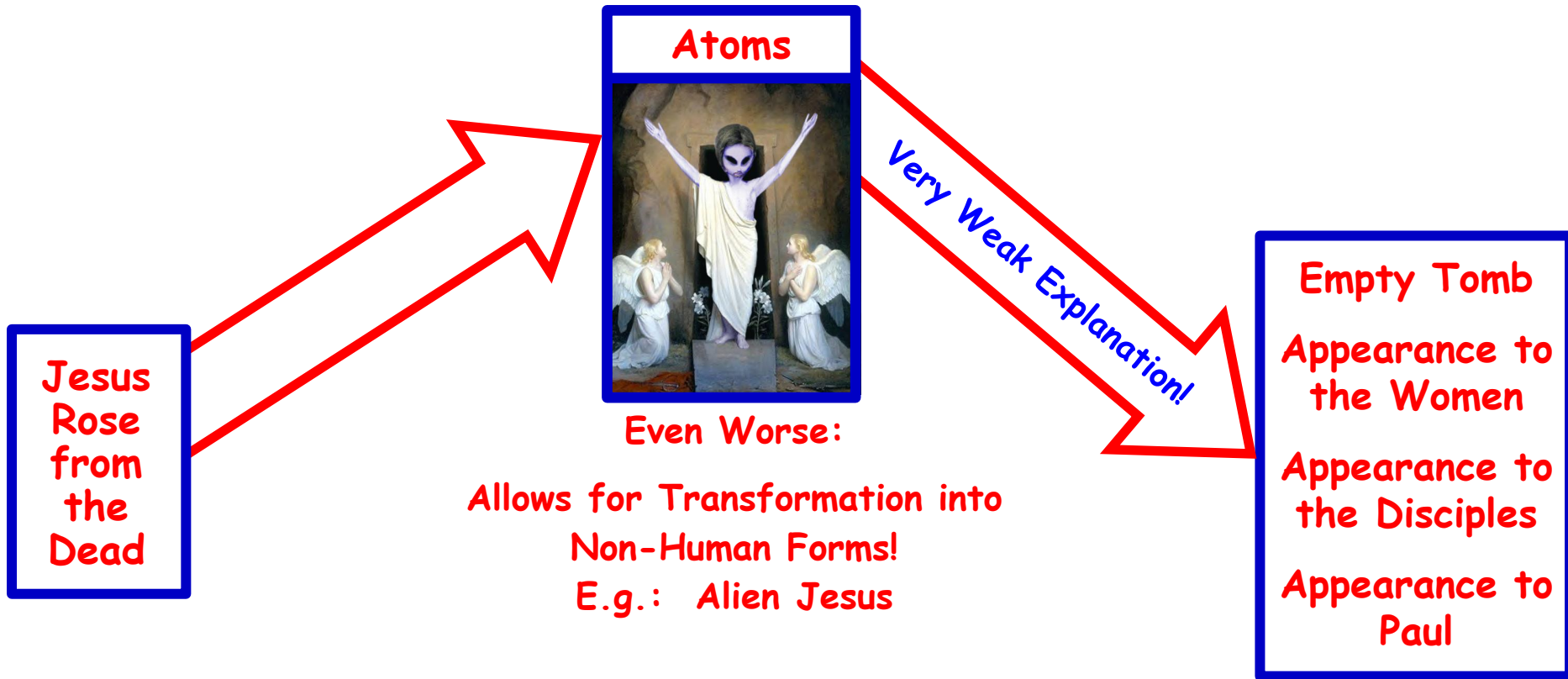
Very Weak Explanation!

Empty Tomb
Appearance to
the Women
Appearance to
the Disciples
Appearance to
Paul

The "Atoms or Schmatoms" Explanatory Dilemma



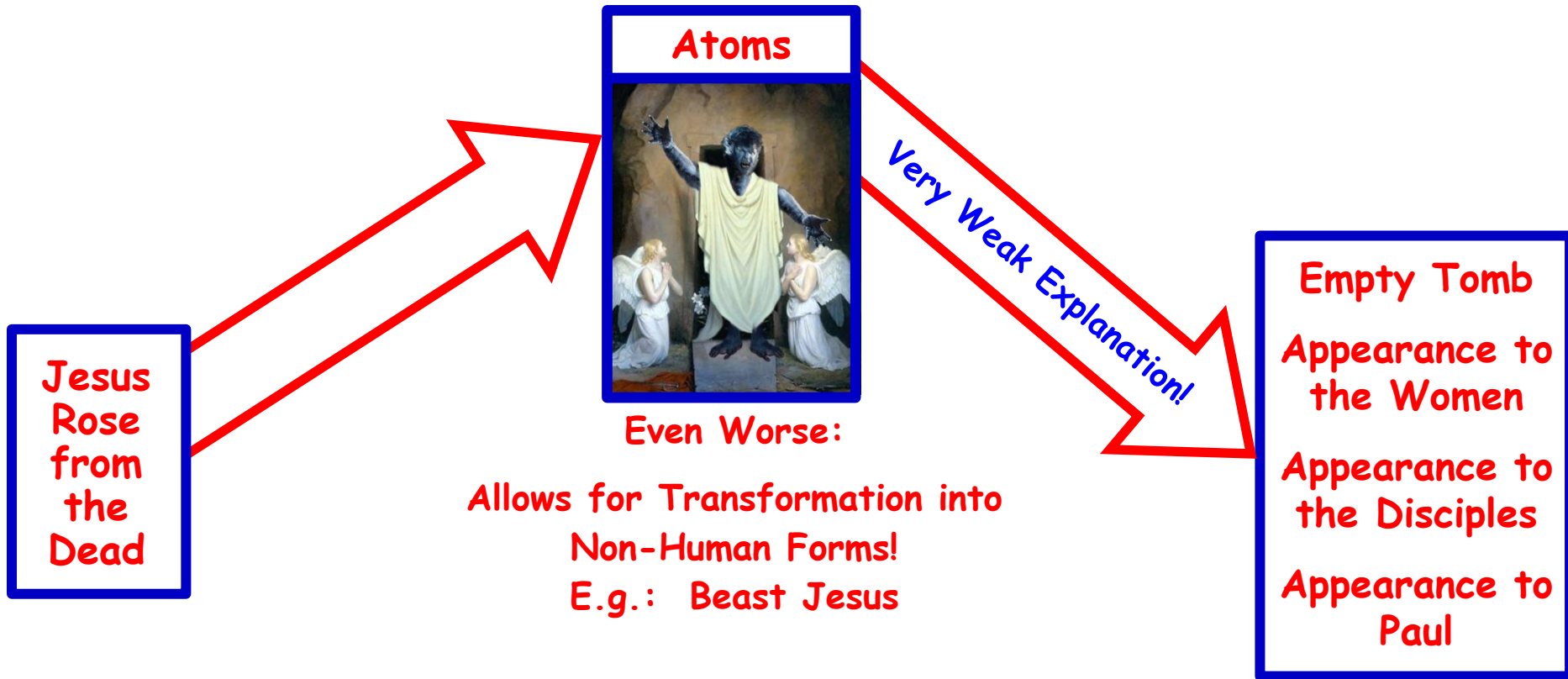
The "Atoms or Schmatoms" Explanatory Dilemma



The "Atoms or Schmatoms" Explanatory Dilemma



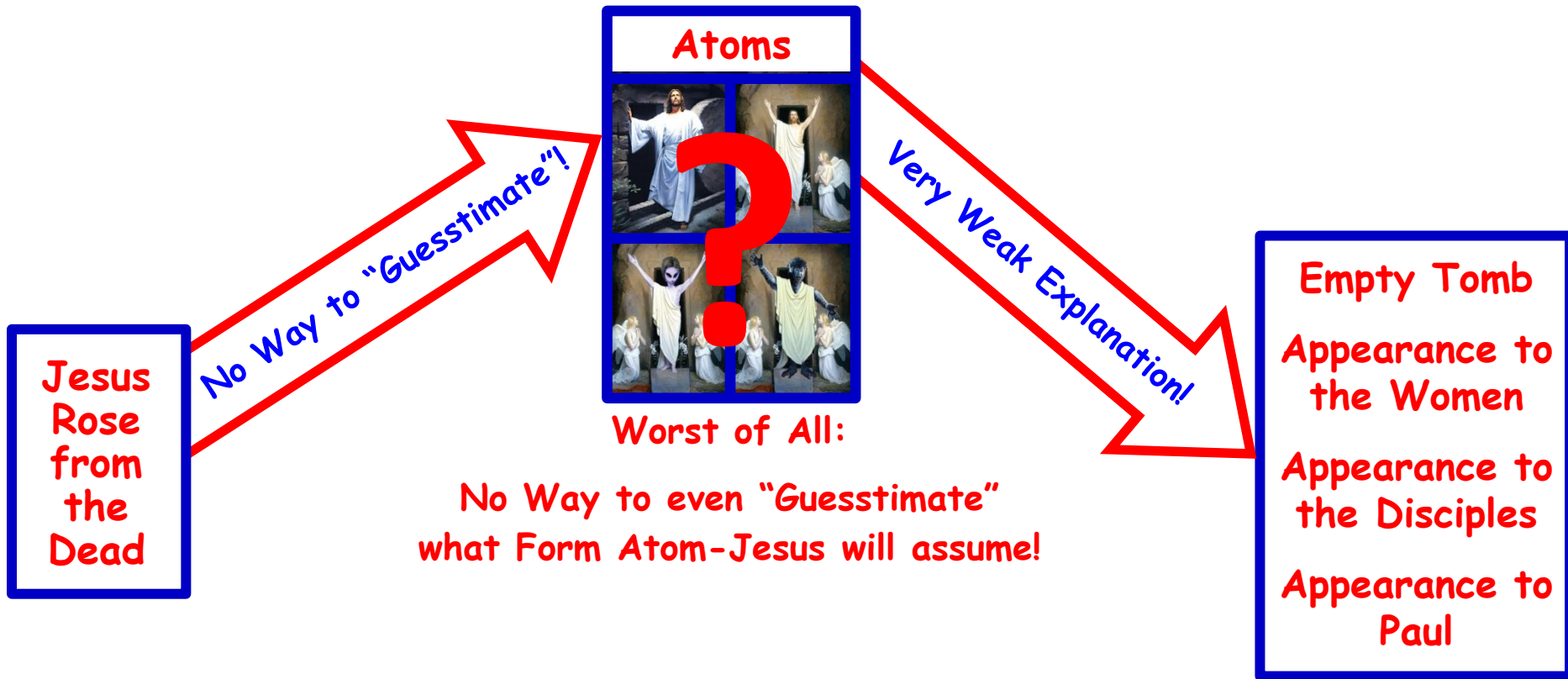
The "Atoms or Schmatoms" Explanatory Dilemma



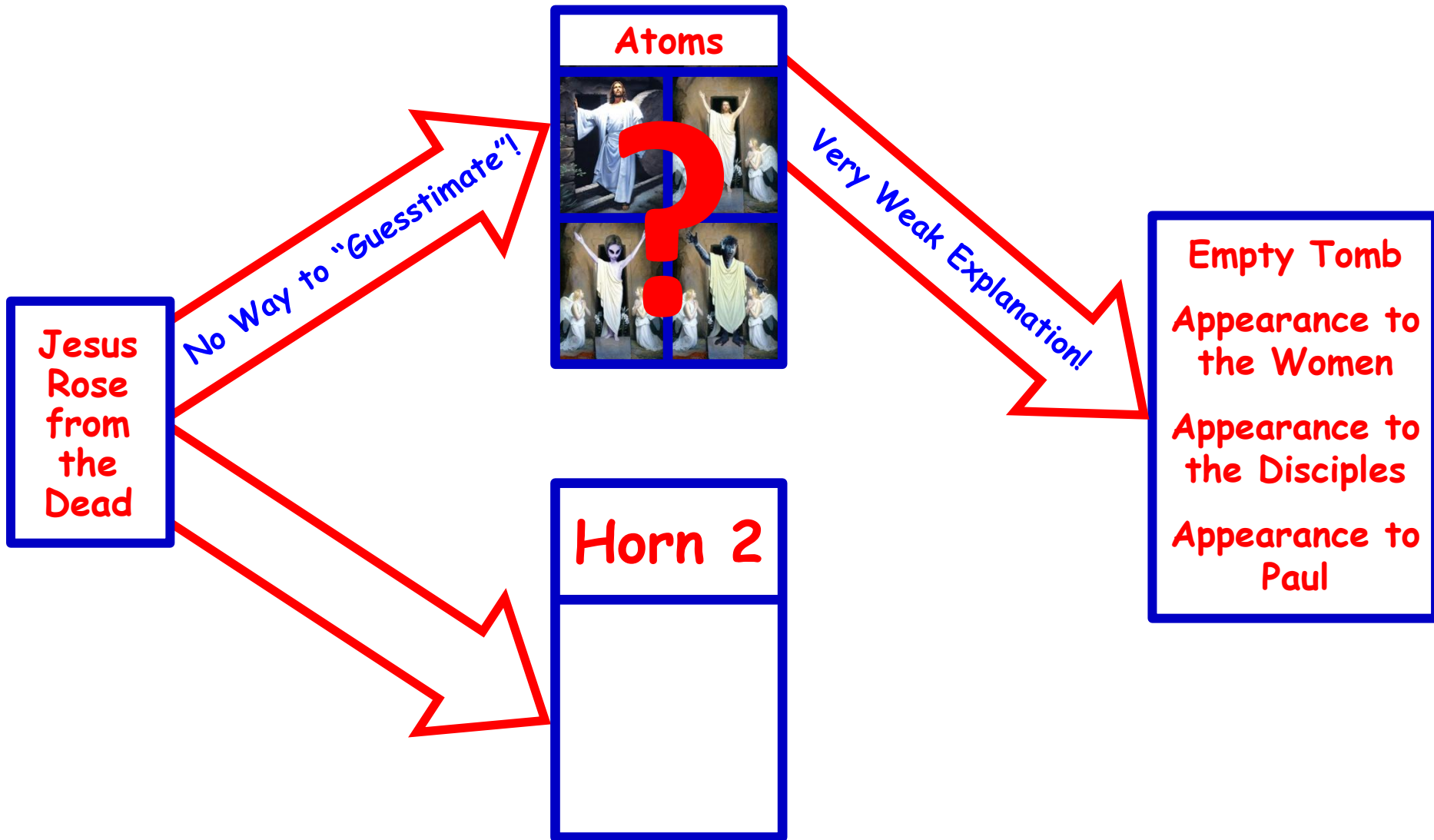
The "Atoms or Schmatoms" Explanatory Dilemma



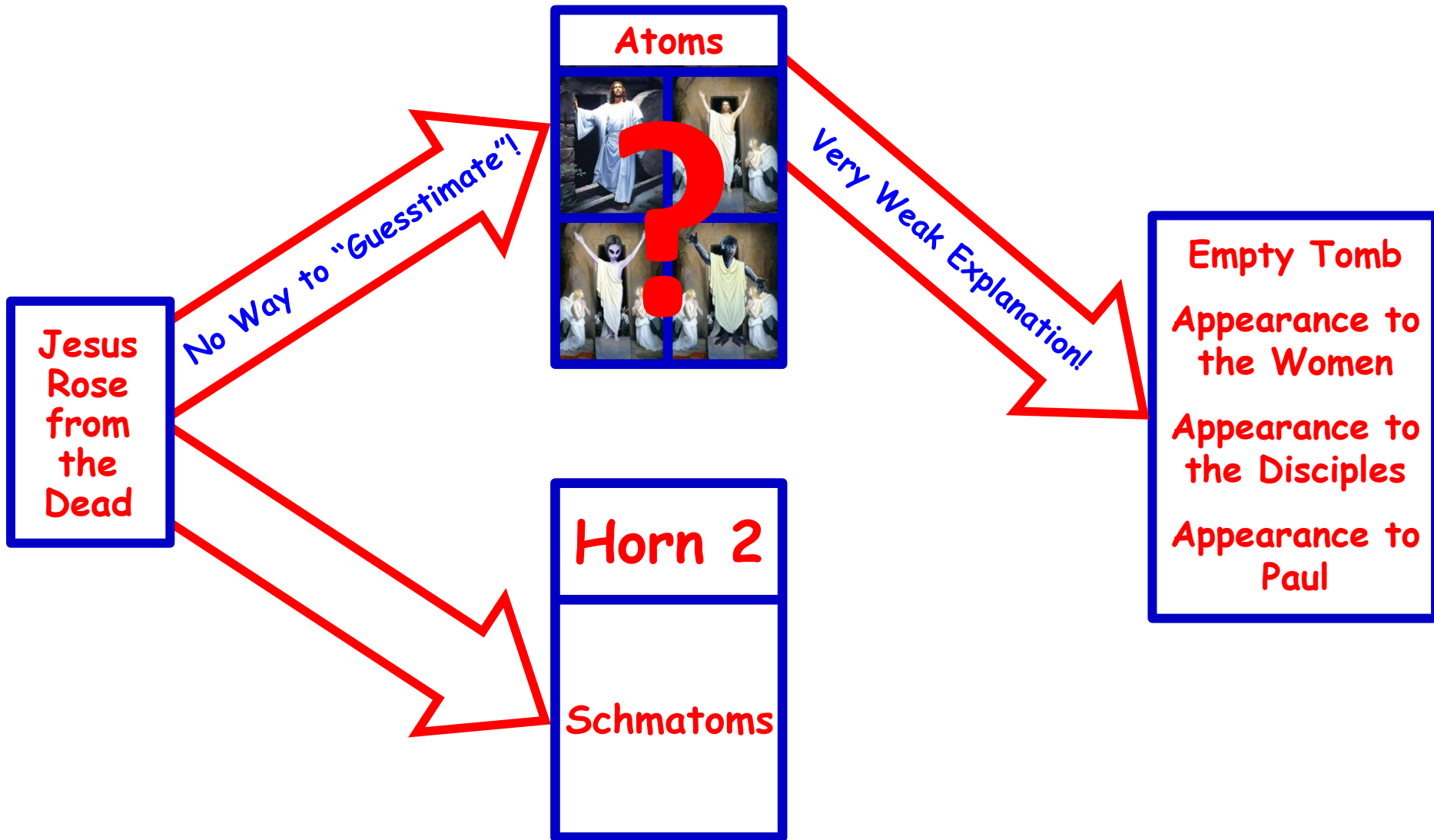
The "Atoms or Schmatoms" Explanatory Dilemma



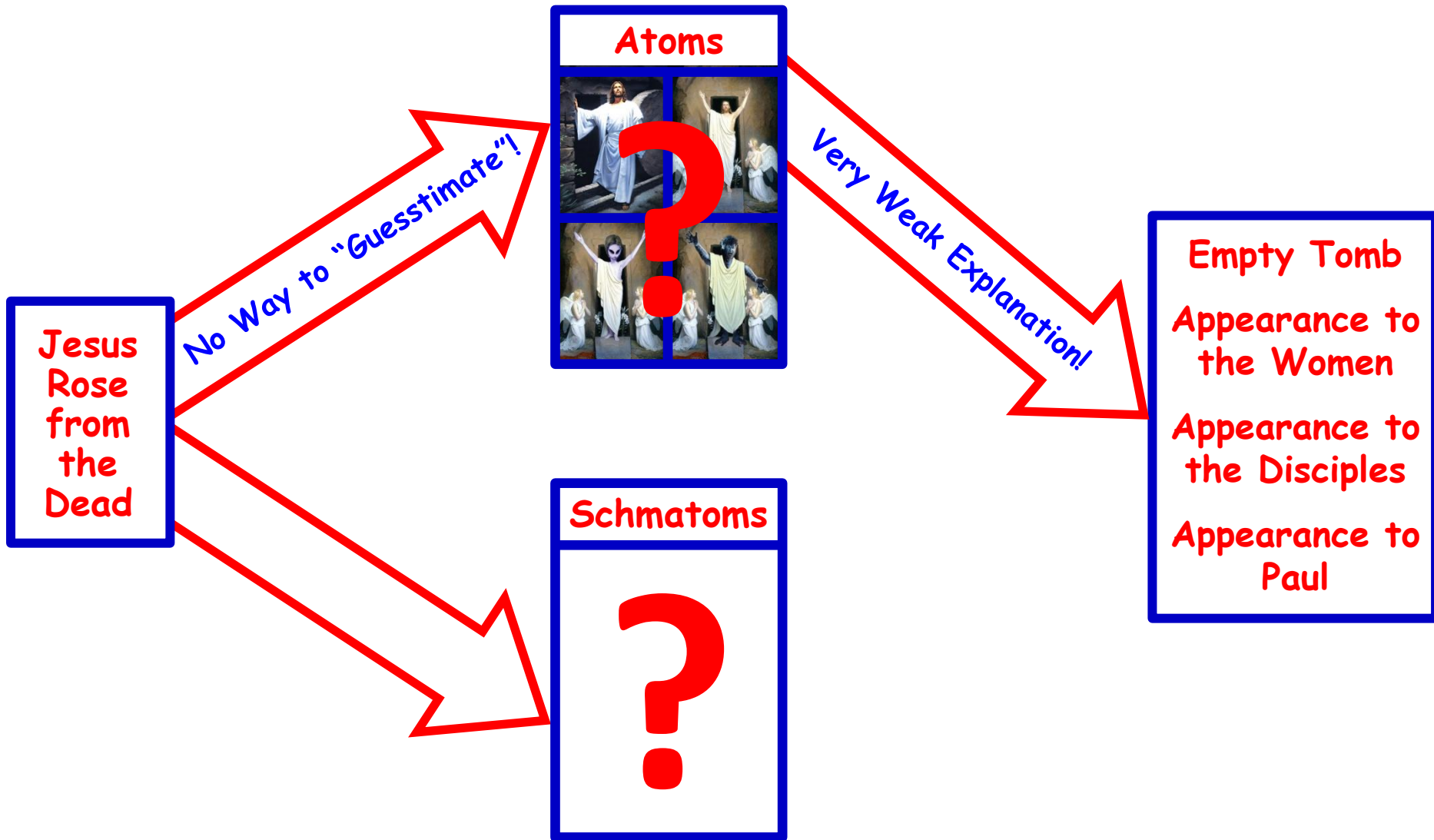
The "Atoms or Schmatoms" Explanatory Dilemma



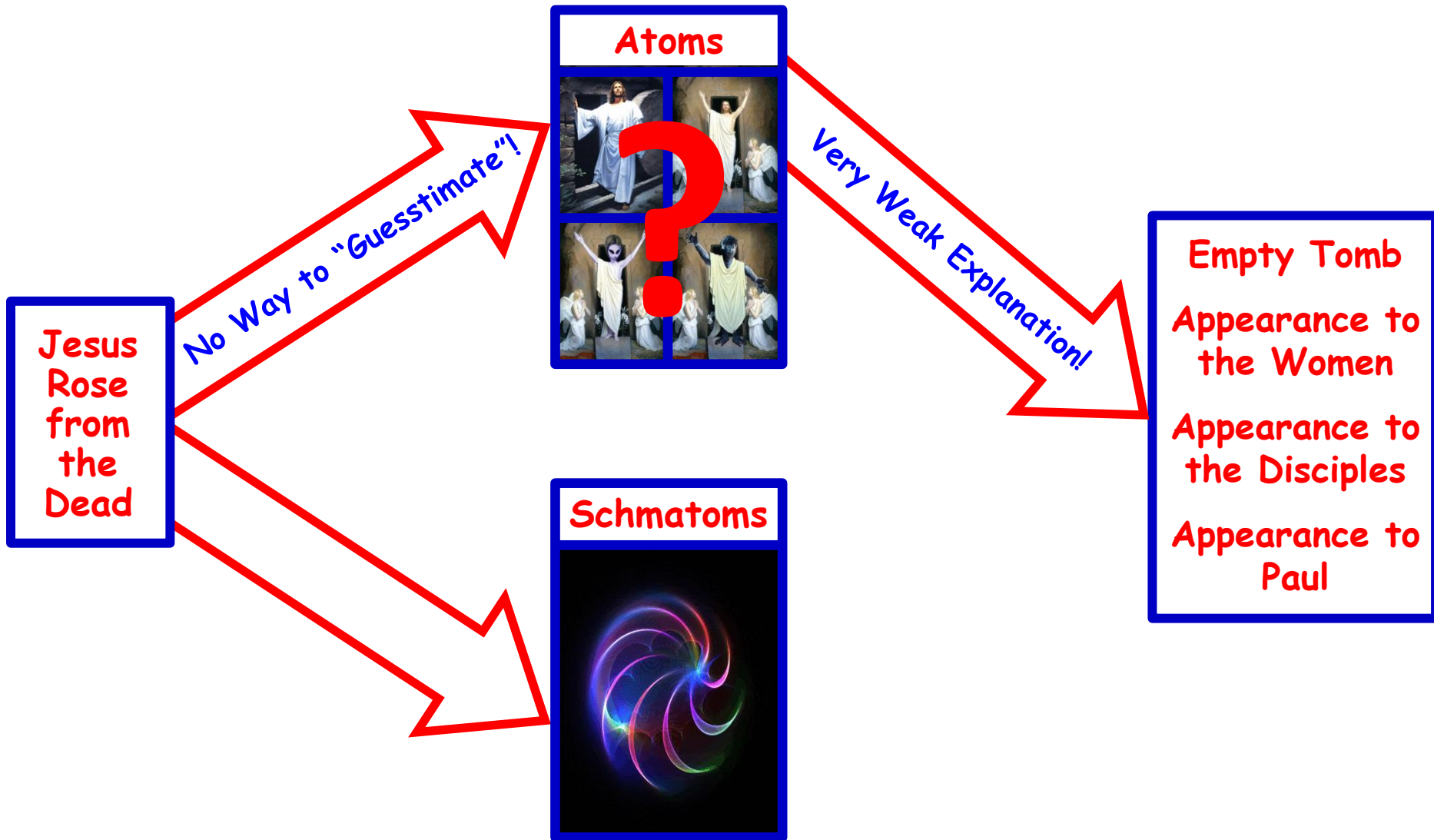
The "Atoms or Schmatoms" Explanatory Dilemma



The "Atoms or Schmatoms" Explanatory Dilemma

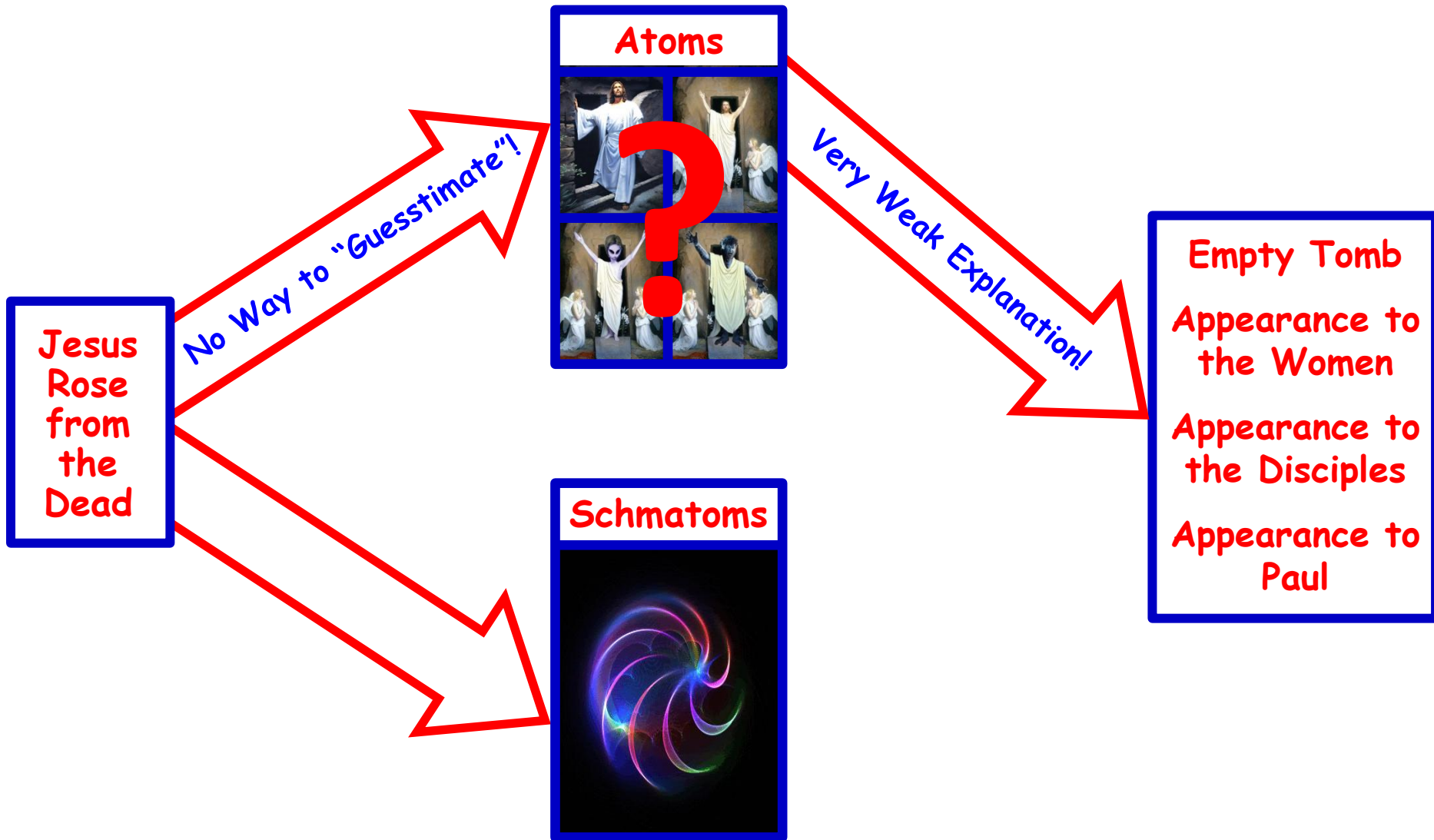


The "Atoms or Schmatoms" Explanatory Dilemma



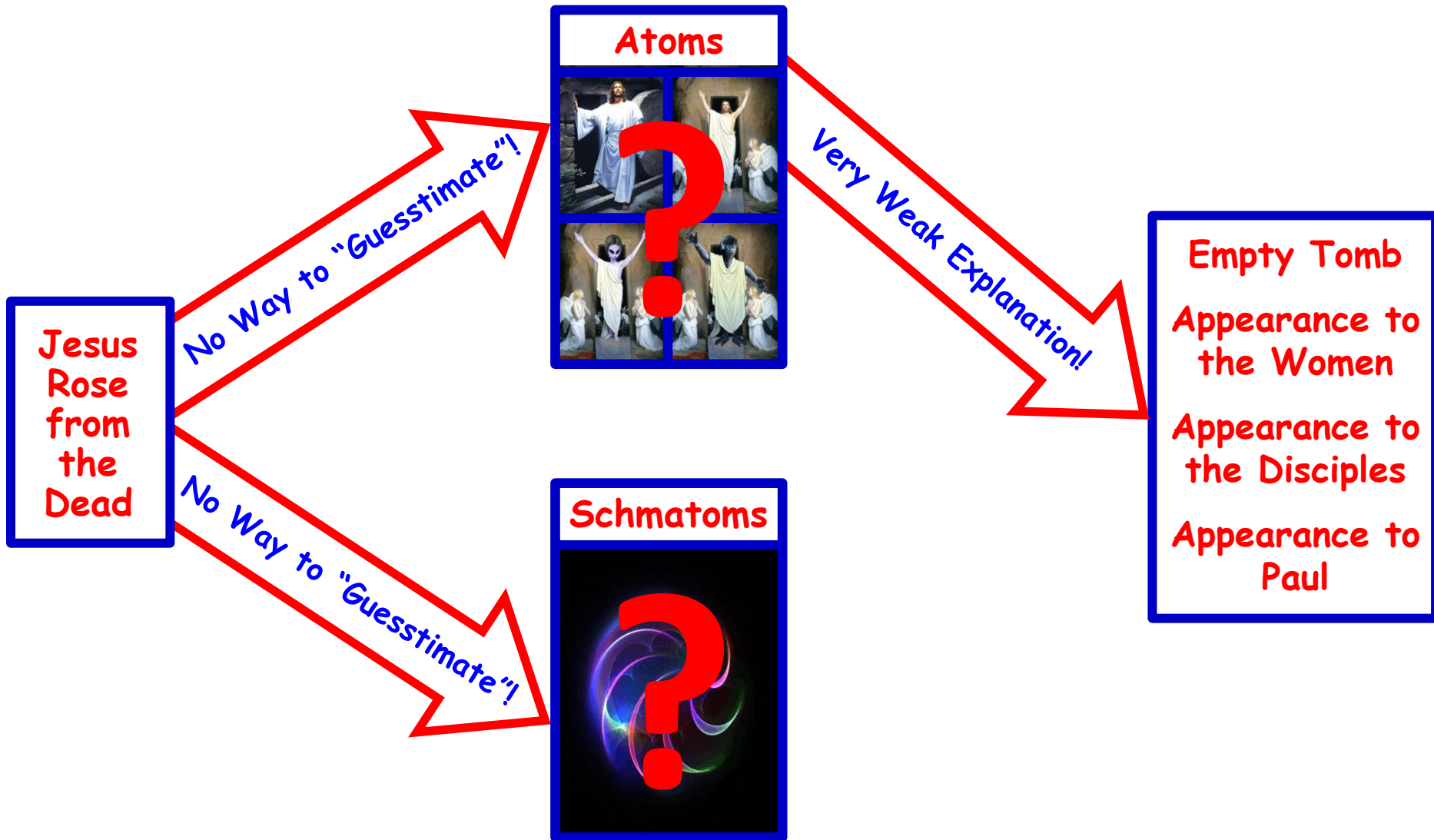
Transformed into Some Wholly Other Form of "Life"
Perhaps Outside of Space-Time!

The "Atoms or Schmatoms" Explanatory Dilemma

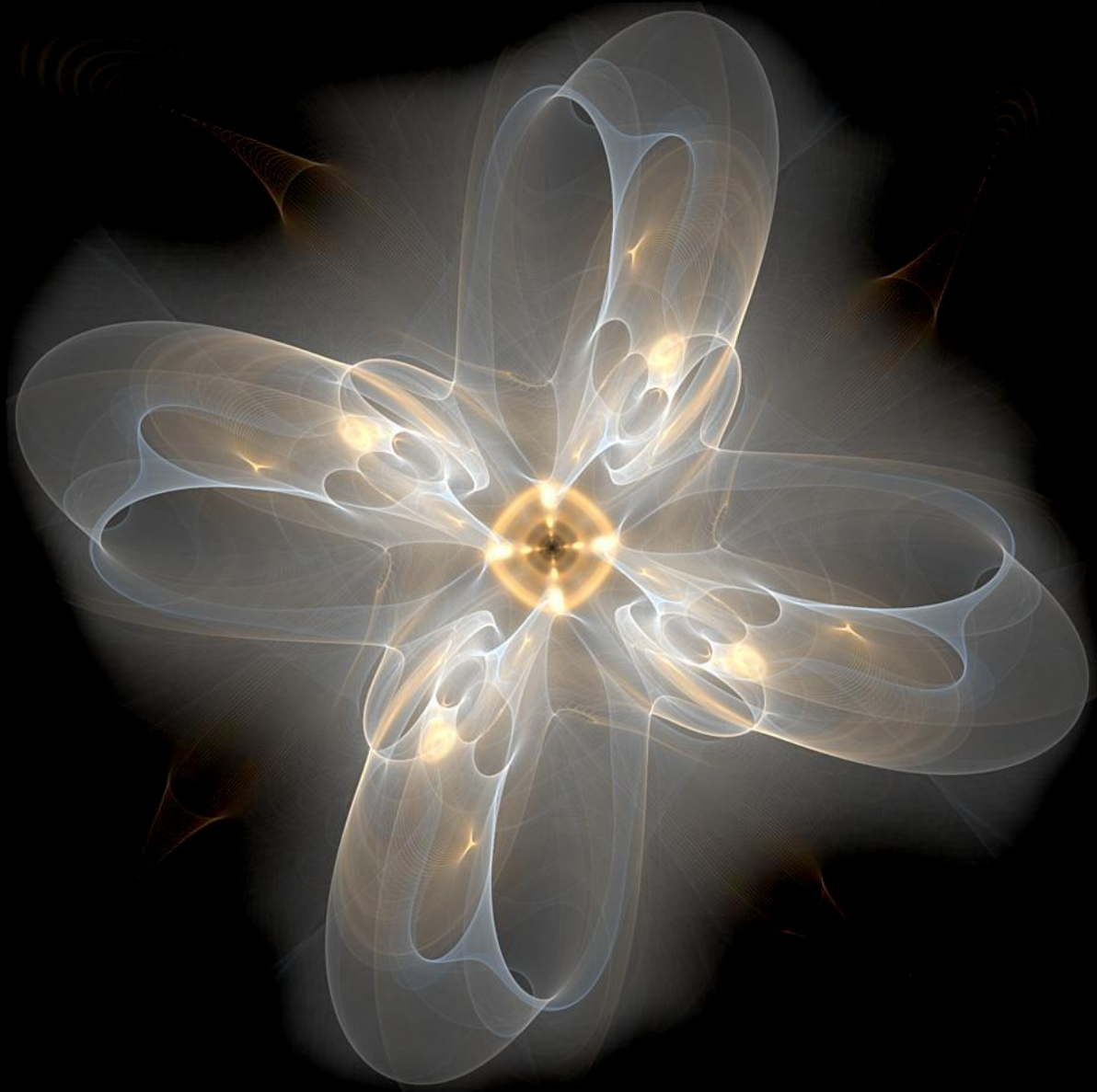


E.g.: *Soma Pneumatikon*
Imperishable, Powerful, Glorious, "Living" Body!

The "Atoms or Schmatoms" Explanatory Dilemma



No way to "Guesstimate" what Schmatom-Jesus would be!

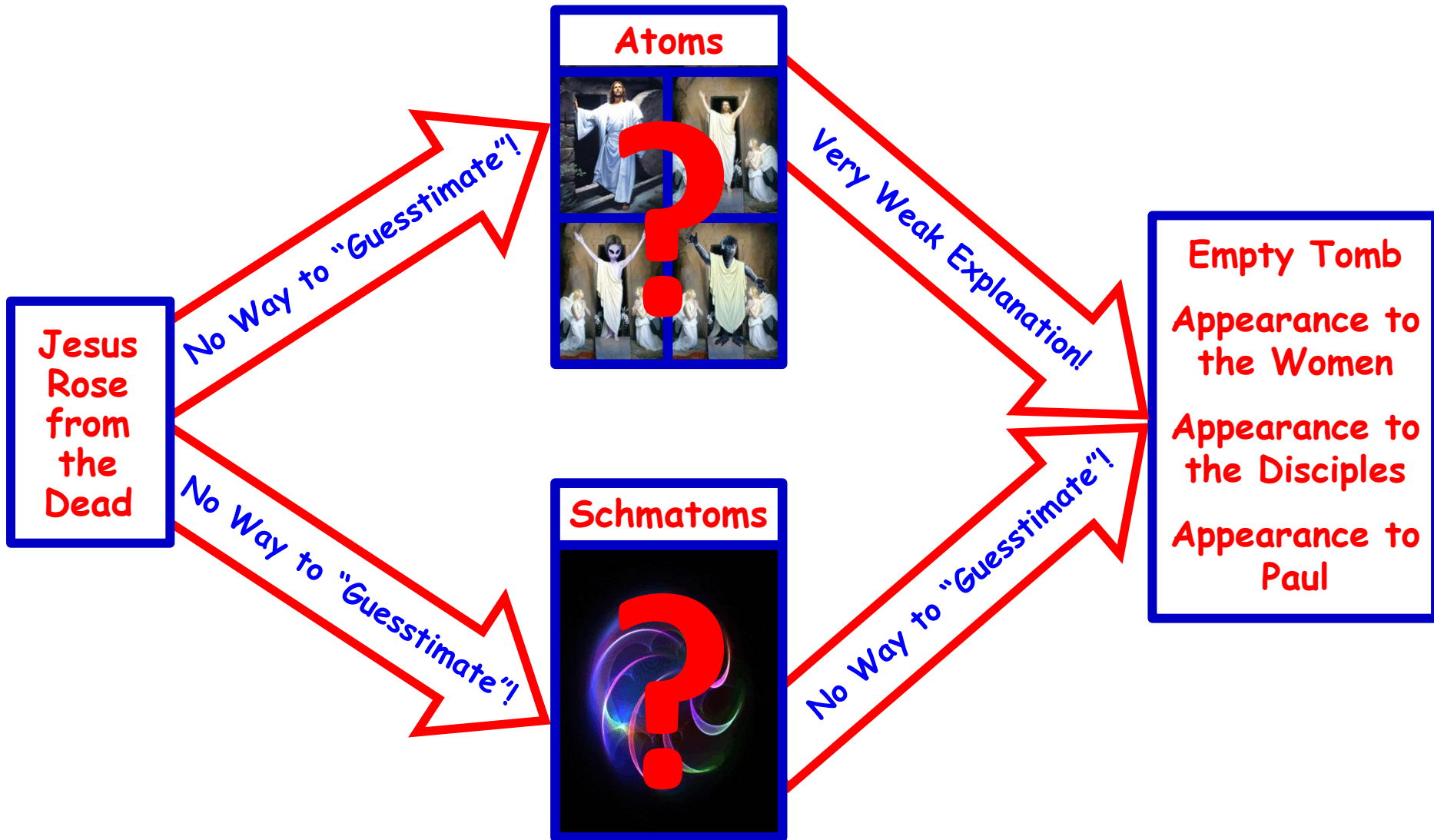






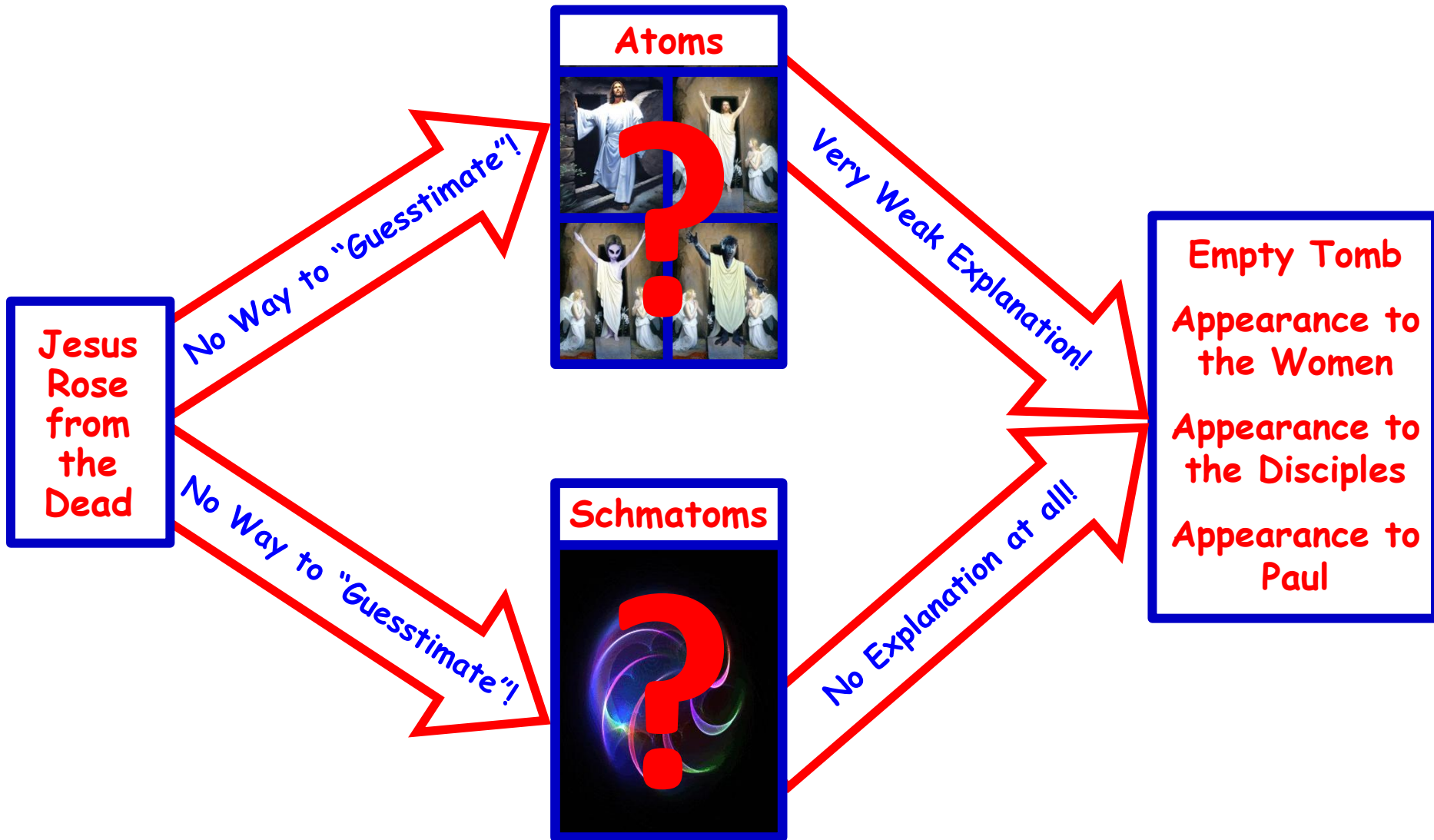


The "Atoms or Schmatoms" Explanatory Dilemma



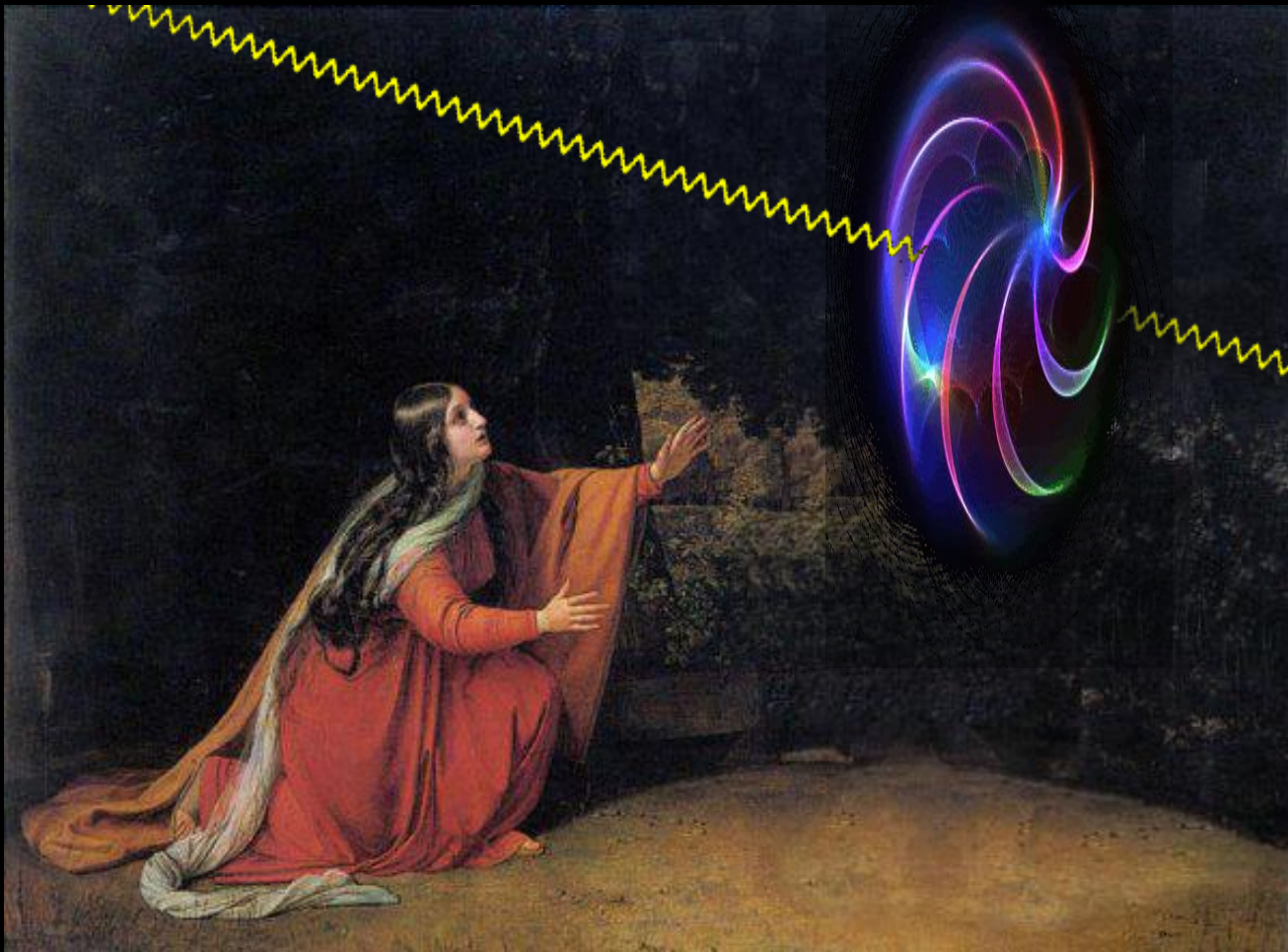
No way to "Guesstimate" what Schmatom-Jesus would do!

The "Atoms or Schmatoms" Explanatory Dilemma

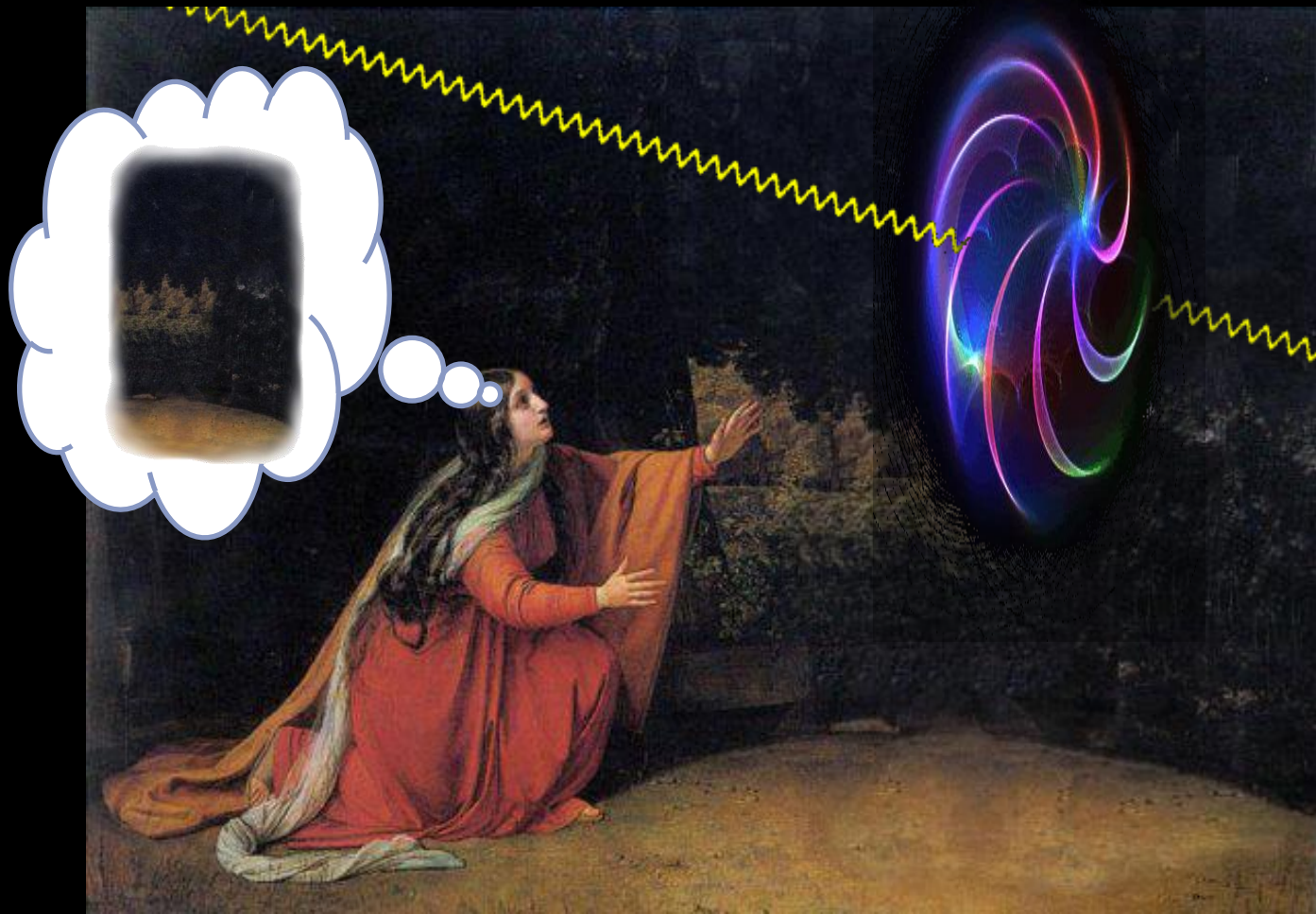


That doesn't matter anyway because schmatoms can't interact with the physical world!

Schmatom-Jesus cannot be seen
because his "body" can't interact with light!



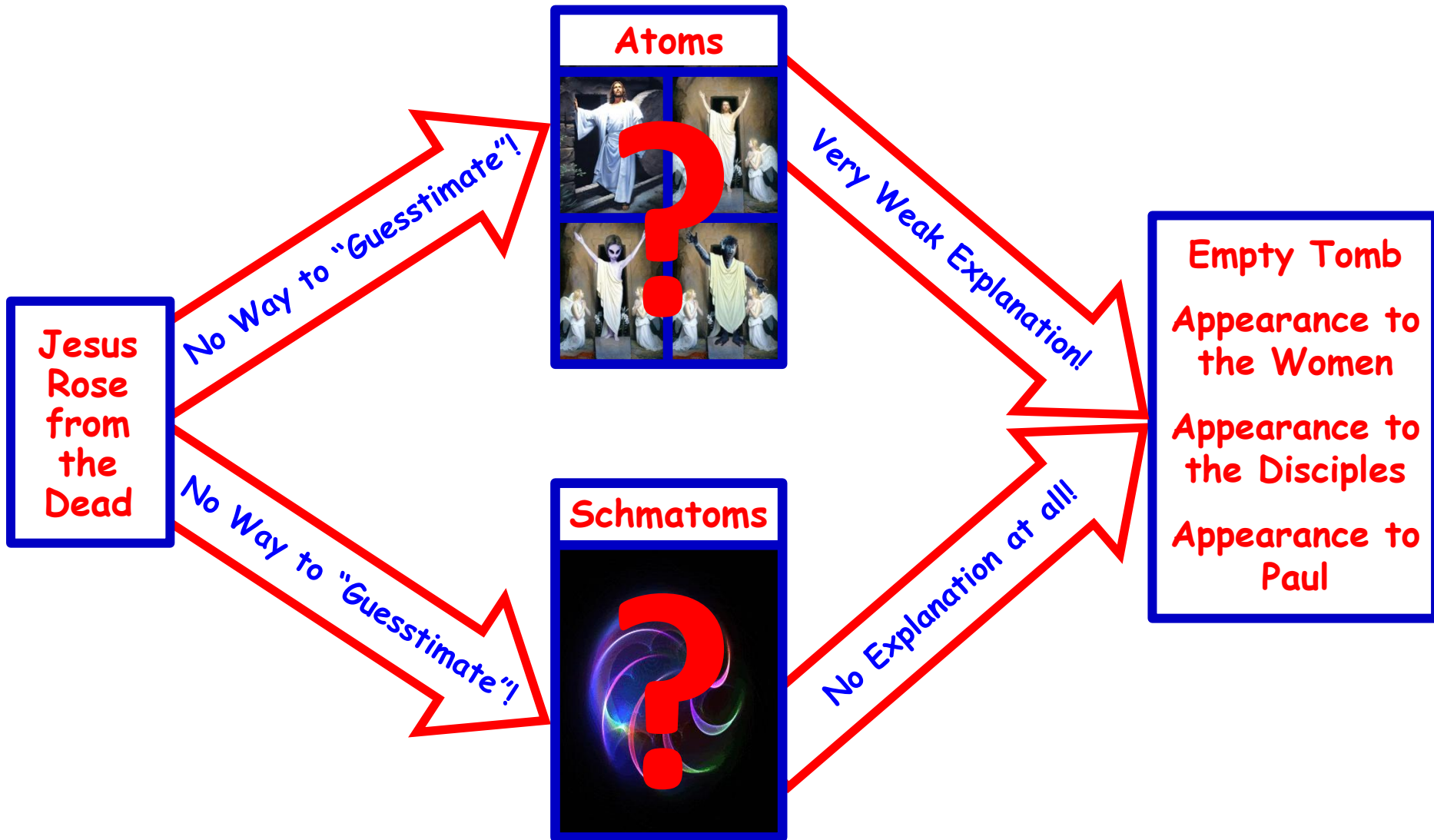
Mary can see nothing but her surroundings!



There is no observational difference between Schmatom-Jesus and nothing at all!



The "Atoms or Schmatoms" Explanatory Dilemma



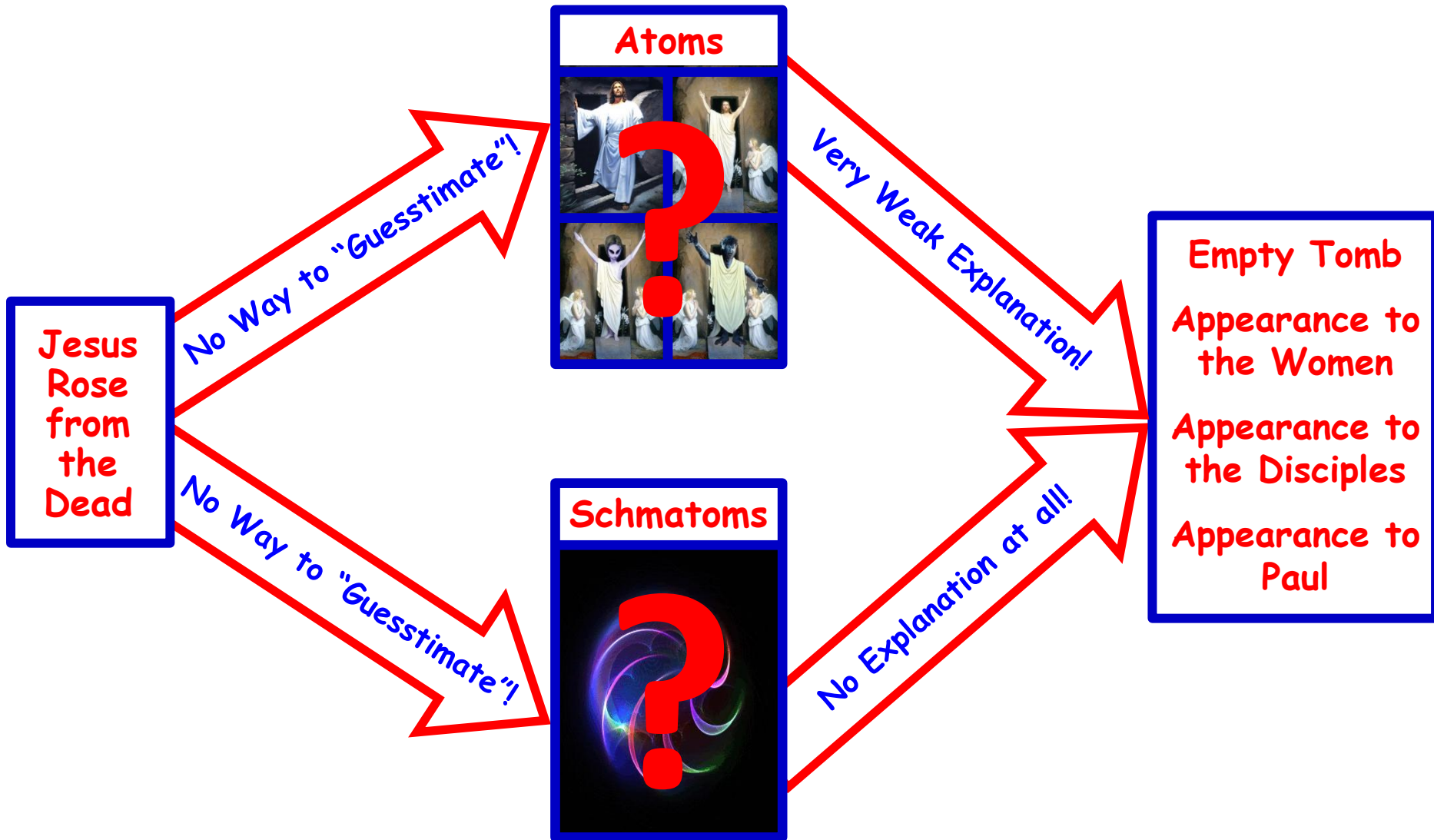
Thus, be it atoms or schmatoms, the Risen Jesus is a Complete Unknown—an "X"!

The "Atoms or Schmatoms" Explanatory Dilemma



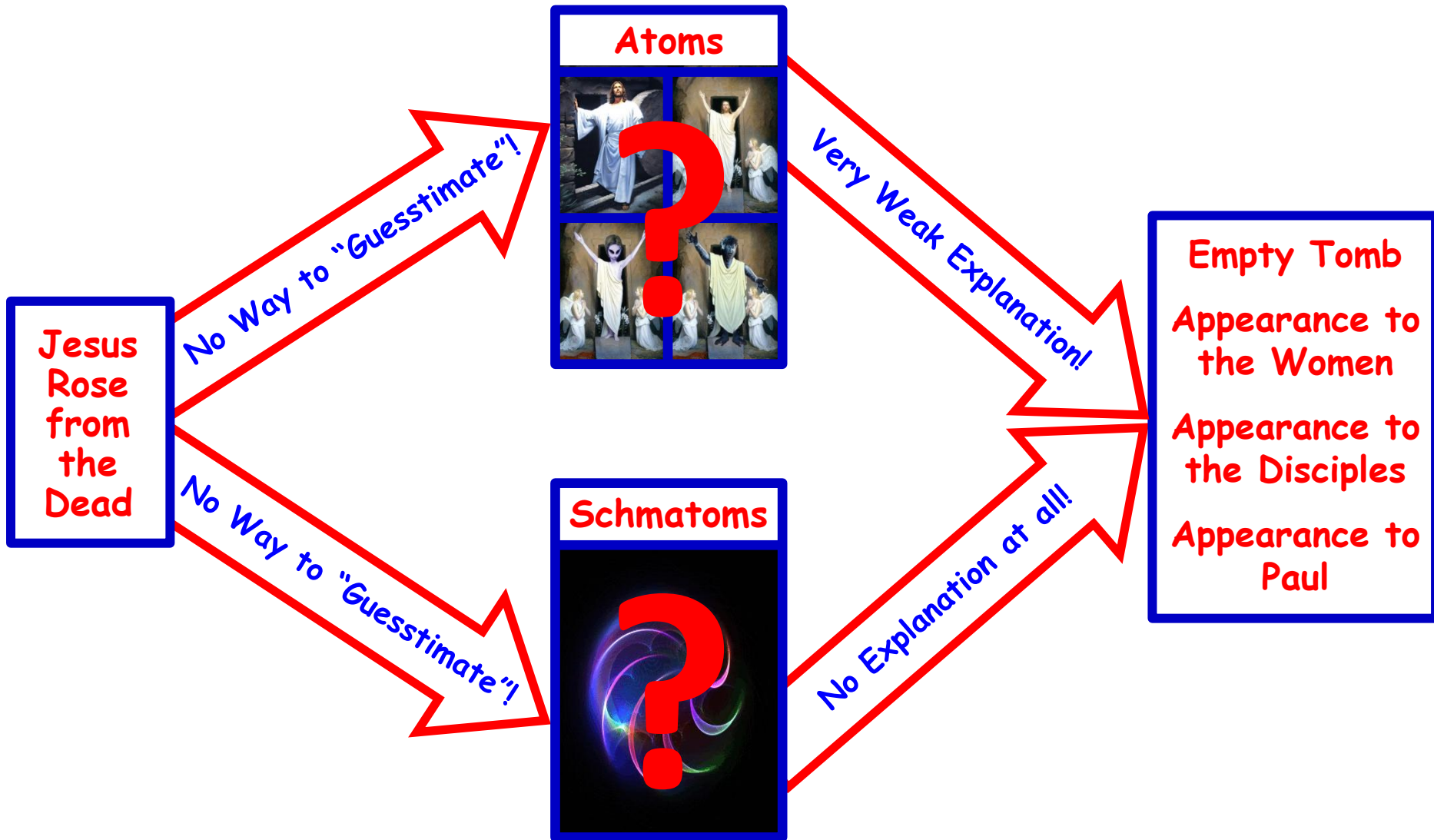
**Thus, be it atoms or schmatoms, the Risen Jesus is
a Complete Unknown—an "X"!**

The "Atoms or Schmatoms" Explanatory Dilemma



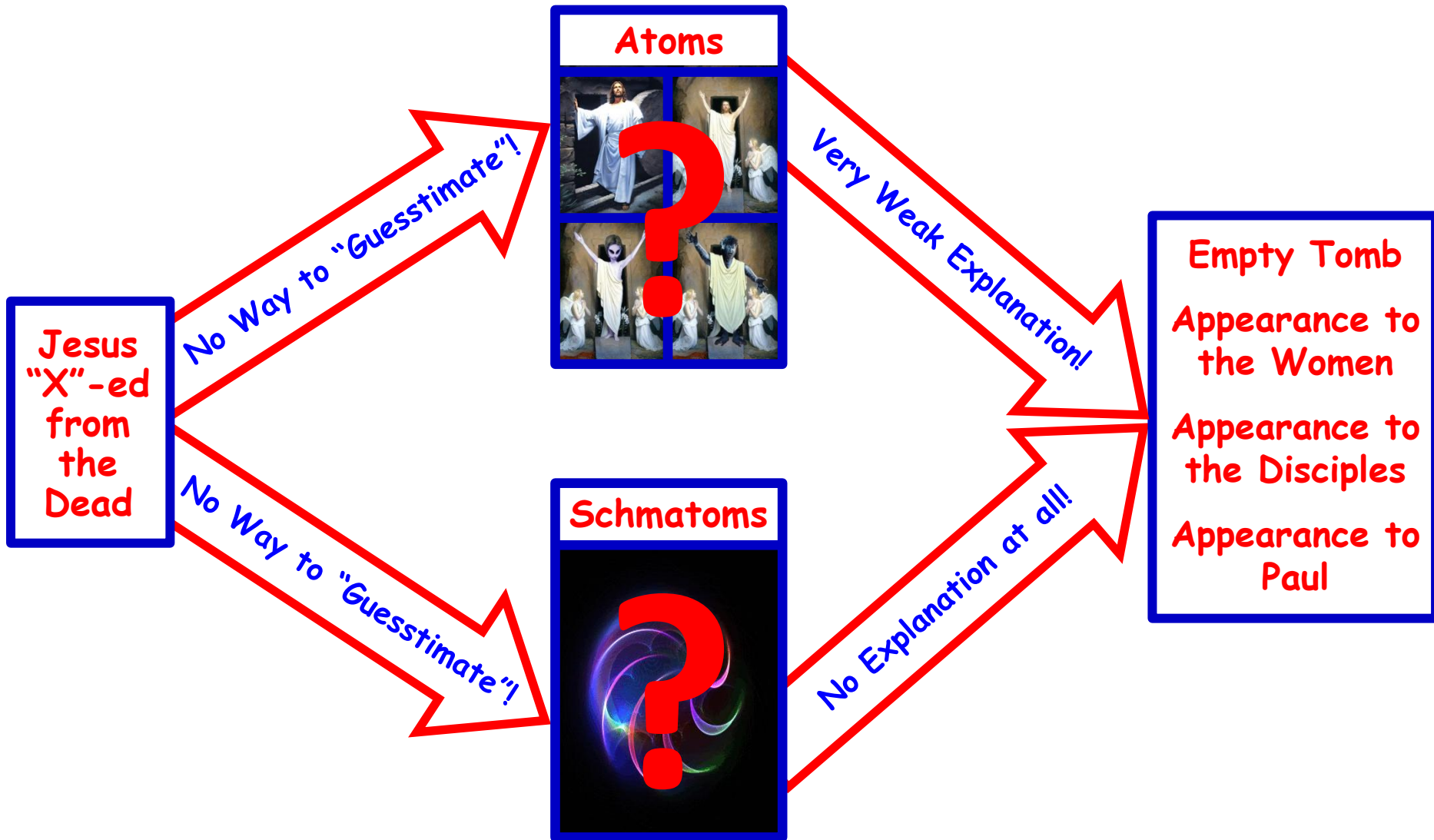
The One True "X-Man"!

The "Atoms or Schmatoms" "X-Man" Dilemma



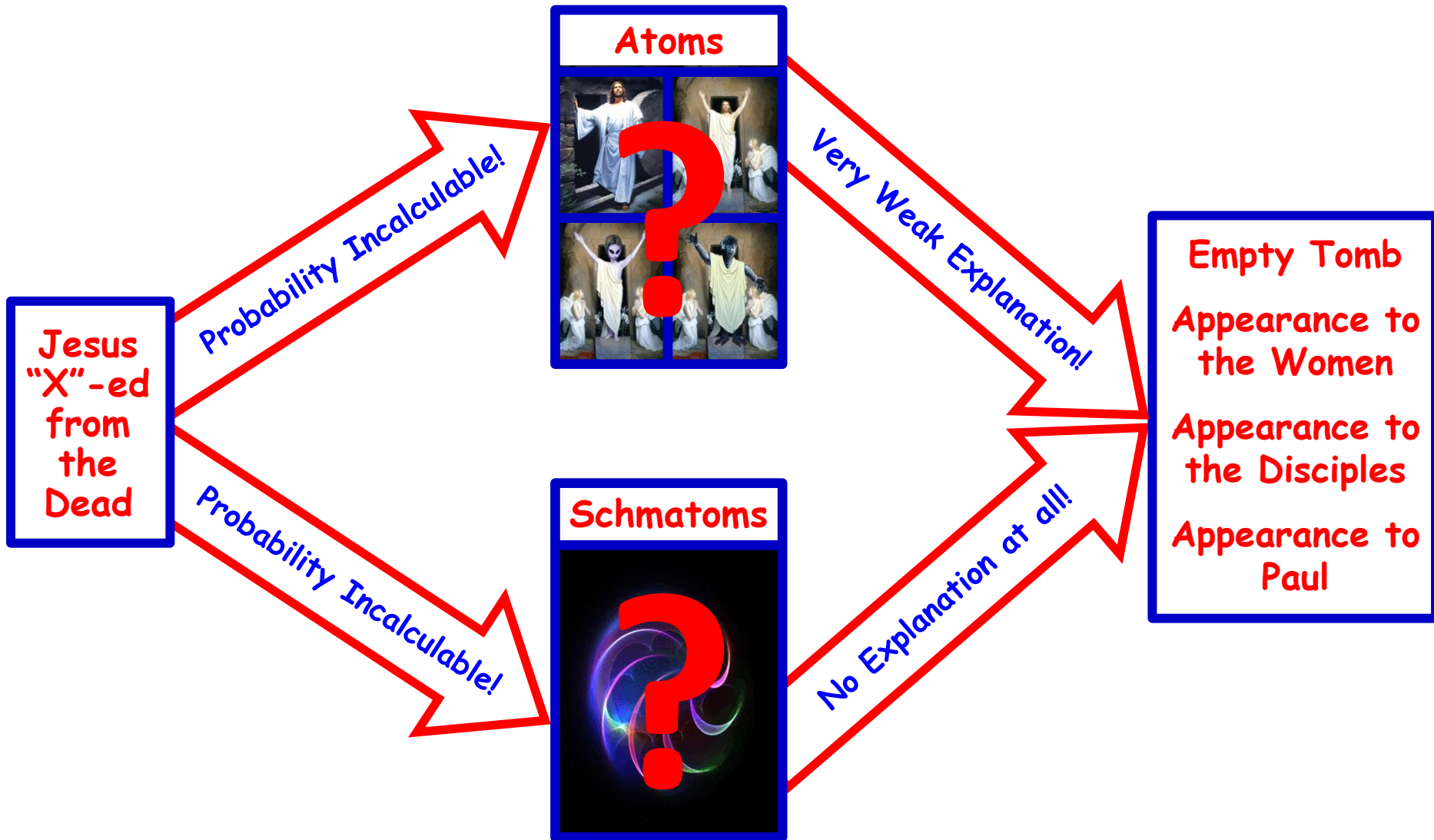
And so the Resurrection Theory becomes the "X-Man" Theory!

The "Atoms or Schmatoms" "X-Man" Dilemma



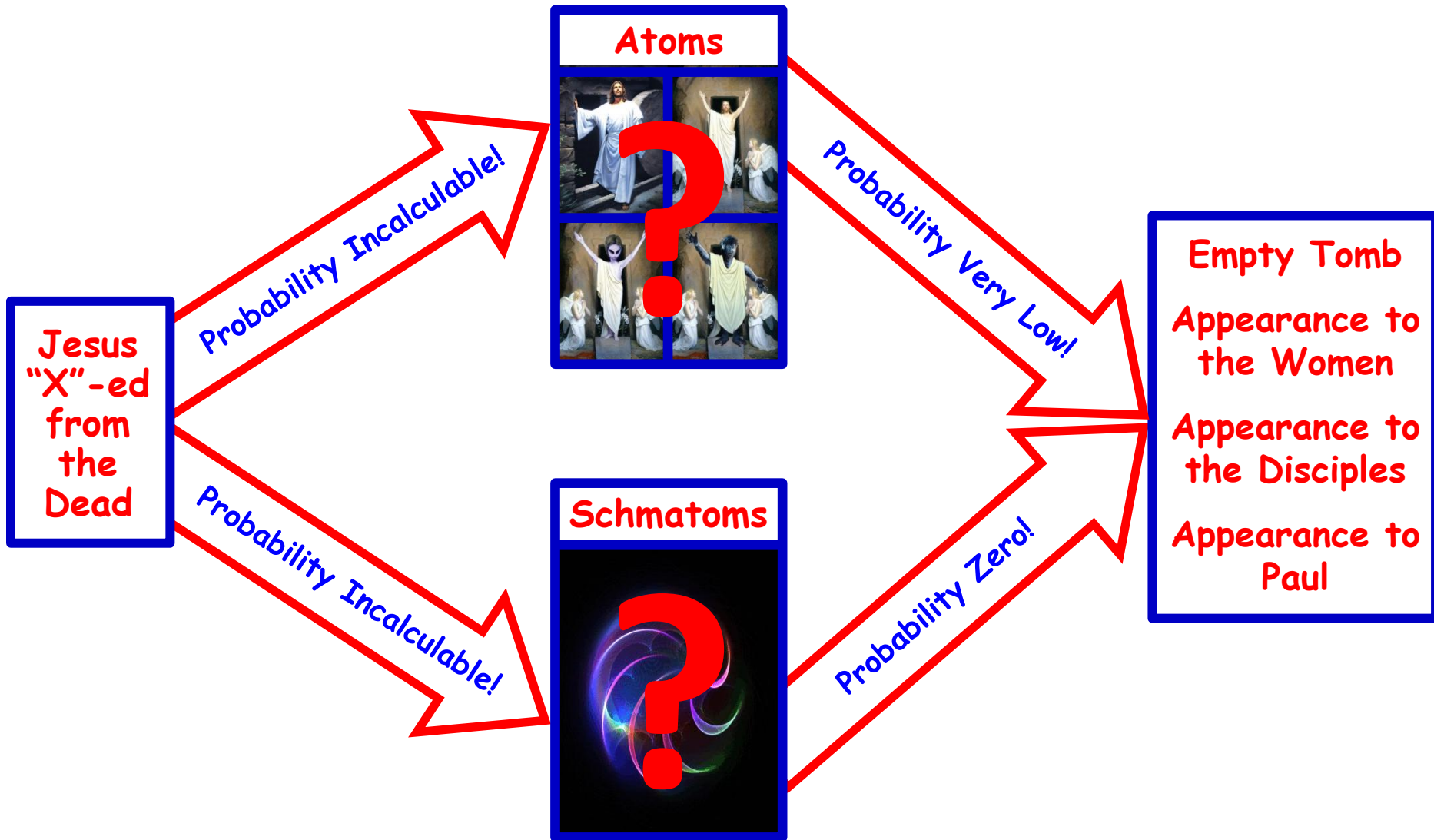
We have no way to even "Guesstimate" what the "X-Man" would be and so we have no way to "Guesstimate" what he would do!

The "Atoms or Schmatoms" "X-Man" Dilemma



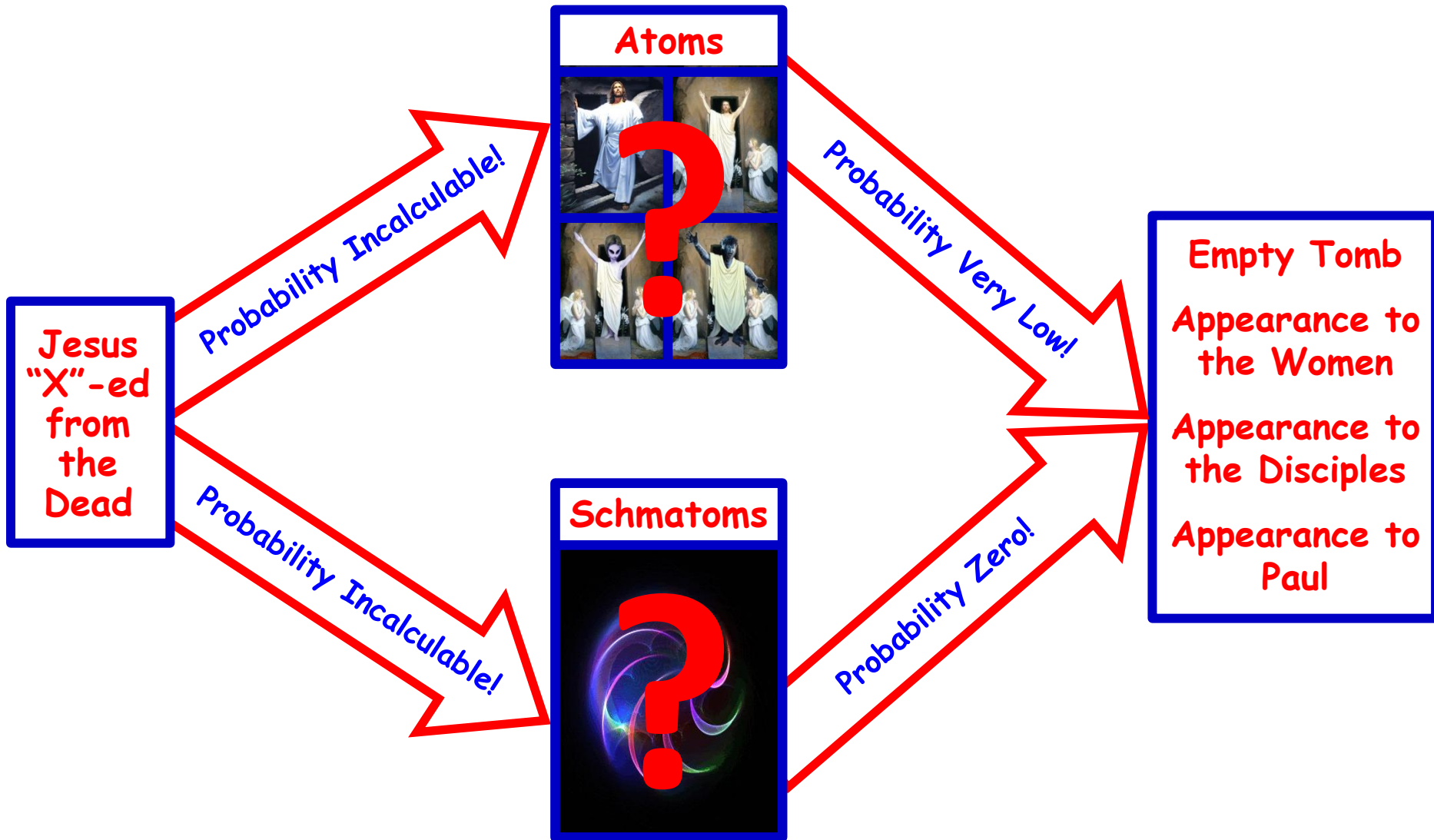
Thus the probability of what the "X-Man" would be is incalculable!

The "Atoms or Schmatoms" "X-Man" Dilemma



Atom-Jesus confers a very low probability on the facts of Easter whereas Schmatom-Jesus confers a zero probability upon them!

The "Atoms or Schmatoms" "X-Man" Dilemma



Thus the "X-Man" Theory gives us no way of explaining the empty tomb and the postmortem appearances!

Atoms or Schmatoms?



The "Atoms or Schmatoms" "X-Man" Dilemma

$P(T \& A \text{ on } R) =$

The "Atoms or Schmatoms" "X"- "Man" Dilemma

$$P(T \& A \text{ on } R) = P(T \& A \text{ on "X"})$$

The "Atoms or Schmatoms" "X"- "Man" Dilemma

$$P(T \& A \text{ on } R) = \begin{cases} P(\text{Atoms on "X"}) & \times & P(T \& A \text{ on "X" \& Atoms}) \\ + \\ P(\text{Schmatoms on "X"}) & \times & P(T \& A \text{ on "X" \& Schmatoms}) \end{cases}$$

The "Atoms or Schmatoms" "X"- "Man" Dilemma

$$P(T \& A \text{ on } R) = \left\{ \begin{array}{l} ? \\ ? \end{array} \right. + \begin{array}{l} \text{Very Low} \\ 0 \end{array}$$

The "Atoms or Schmatoms" "X"- "Man" Dilemma

$$P(T \& A \text{ on } R) = ? \times \text{very low} + ? \times 0$$

The "Atoms or Schmatoms" "X"- "Man" Dilemma

$$P(T \& A \text{ on } R) = ? + 0$$

The "Atoms or Schmatoms" "X"- "Man" Dilemma

$P(T \& A \text{ on } R) = ?$

The Best Explanation Objection



What this means is that, their protestations to the contrary notwithstanding, resurrectionists do **not** take the (alleged) historical facts **seriously**—they have **no** explanation for the empty tomb or the postmortem appearances of Jesus.

The Best Explanation Objection



Even the most **outlandish** “**naturalistic**” hypothesis—**e.g., Deceptive Space Aliens**—is a **better explanation** of the (alleged) historical facts than the **indeterminate unknown** postulated by the “**X-Man**” theory!

The Best Explanation Objection



Of course, what **little bona fide** historical evidence there is in Paul and the Gospels is far **too weak** to allow us to ever **know for sure** what really happened!

The Best Explanation Objection

Paul and the Gospels
contradict one another
in **what** they say the
Resurrection **is**, **when**
and **where** the Risen
Jesus **was seen**, and
who the witnesses
were, etc.!



The Best Explanation Objection

Still, the Resurrection skeptic **need not deny** that Jesus saw himself as some kind of **messianic figure**, believed he must **die** in that capacity, and told his disciples to go to **Galilee**, after his death, **where** they would see **him in heavenly glory**.



The Best Explanation Objection



This hypothesis would explain the existence of the New Testament and its specific contents far better than do more skeptical theories, e.g., Borg's, and more radical ones, e.g., Crossan's.

The Best Explanation Objection



For example, it fits in perfectly with Jesus' use of **Daniel 7:13** and the tradition that he told the high priest that **"a man"** would be seen being seated at the right hand of Power.

The Best Explanation Objection



The passion-resurrection predictions of Jesus as they now stand in Mark bear many legendary elaborations—yet the hypothesis that there is an historical core to them would explain the fact that they exist.

The Best Explanation Objection



If the disciples were **eagerly expecting** Jesus to rise from the dead and appear to them from "heaven" in **Galilee**, it would not be **too surprising** that their minds would **project** these expectations in the form of **group hallucinations and false memories**.

The Best Explanation Objection



Such hallucinations might be **nocturnal** and **hypnopomic**—coming out of dreams “replaying” the **suggestions** of the **premortem Jesus**—and thus seem **utterly real!**

The Best Explanation Objection



Being in the form of
visions, the **idiosyncratic**
nature of the group
hallucinations would be of
no concern.

The Best Explanation Objection



The tomb in Jerusalem
would be **too far** away to
aversely affect the
disciples' **expectations**.

The Best Explanation Objection



Moreover, it is **not unreasonable** to suppose that the body of Jesus would have been **moved from the tomb without his family and followers knowing.**

The Best Explanation Objection



This theory of the **unknown removal** of the corpse of Jesus from the tomb and **group hallucinations** based on **strong expectations** has a **higher overall balance of prior probability and explanatory power** than the Resurrection!

The Best Explanation Objection



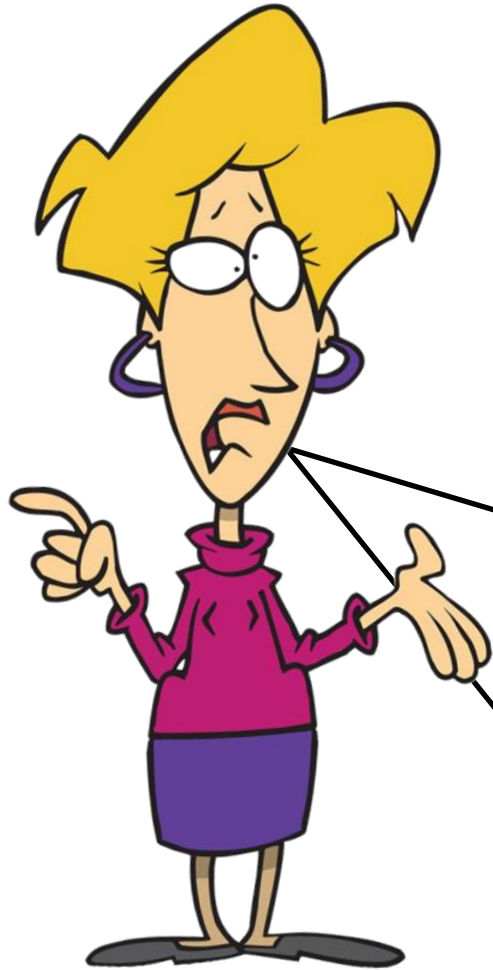
This is all the more so in light of the “**Atoms or Schmatoms?**” Dilemma, which shows that the resurrectionist “**X-Man**” theory has **no explanatory power** at all!

The Best Explanation Objection



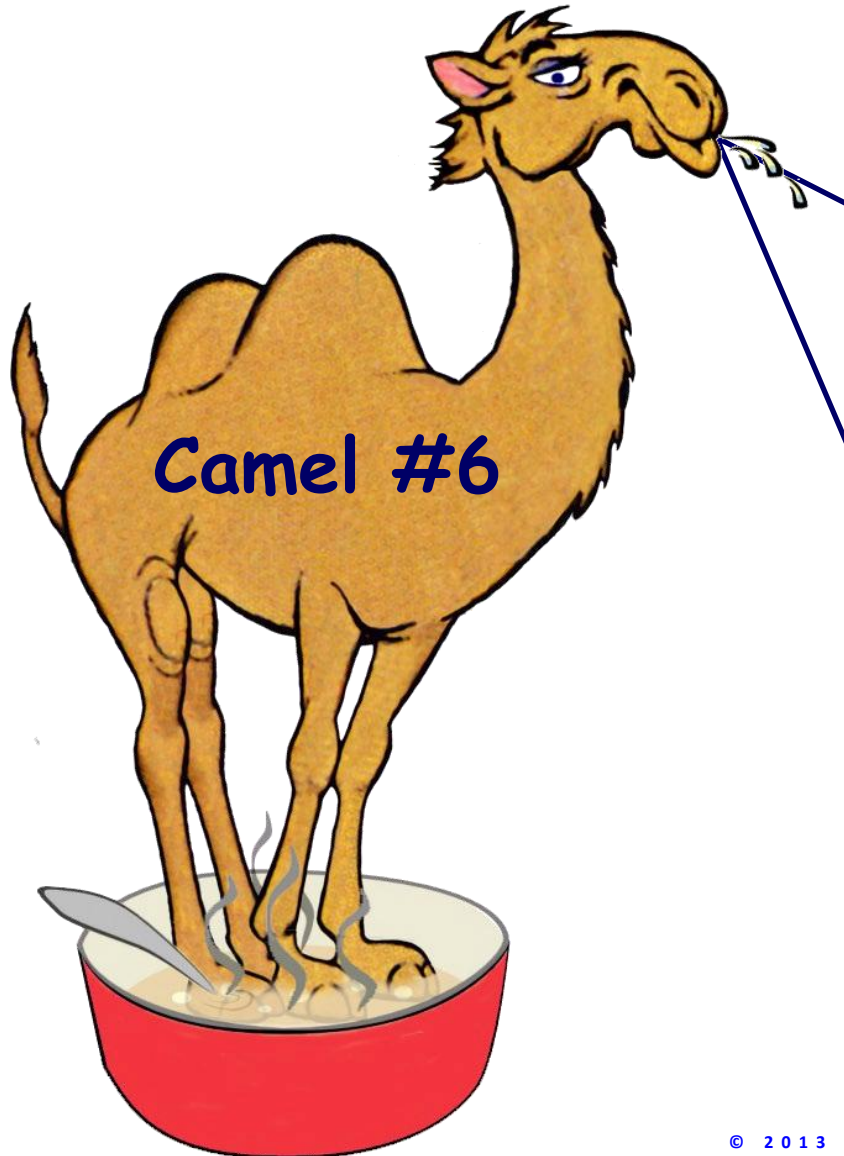
Of course, this is **not** to say that this proposal is the **best explanation** of the (alleged) historical evidence or that it is **more probable than not**.

The Best Explanation Objection



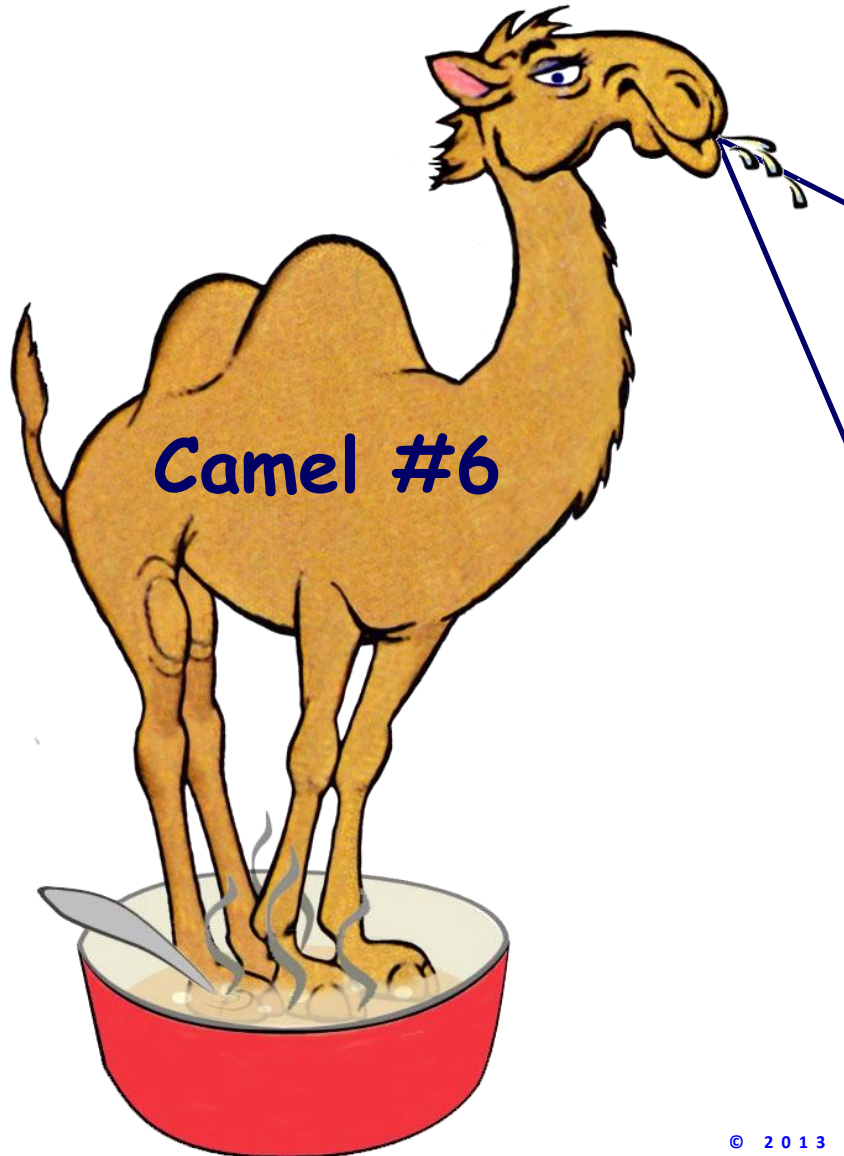
But it **beats** the
Resurrection "X-
Man" theory
hands down!

The Frequencies Objection



It is a fallacy to appeal to frequencies as evidence for the low prior probability of the Resurrection since this ignores the action of external agents

The Frequencies Objection



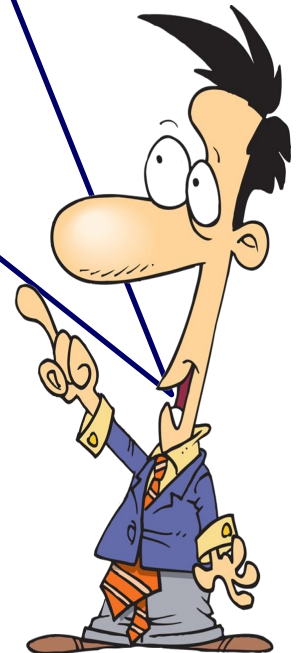
It is a fallacy to appeal to frequencies as evidence for the low prior probability of the Resurrection since this ignores the action of external agents

The Frequencies Objection

It may be a fallacy to appeal to frequencies as evidence of the low prior probability of the Resurrection—but **not for the reason** given by the objection, namely, that such frequencies **ignore the action of external agents, such as God. For they don't!**

Cases we've observed
where the dead have
not risen

Cases we've observed
where an external agent
has not raised the dead

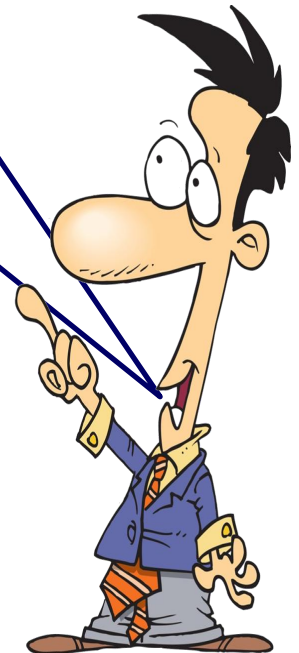


The Frequencies Objection

The cases we've observed of the non-risen dead are **ipso facto** cases in which an **external agent** (e.g., **God**) has not supernaturally raised the dead.

Cases we've observed where the dead have not risen

Cases we've observed where an external agent has not raised the dead



The Frequencies Objection

Thus, the observed frequency of non-resurrections **automatically factors in** the frequency with which external agents (e.g., **God**) do not **supernaturally** raise the dead!

Cases we've observed where the dead have not risen

Cases we've observed where an external agent has not raised the dead



The Frequencies Objection



Of course, this
hardly means that
we **can** or **should** use
observational-
relative frequencies
as **the basis** for
calculating the prior
probability of the
Resurrection!

Μὴ γένοιτο!

The Frequencies Objection



Although generally speaking observational-relative frequencies serve as one **very important** kind of evidence for calculating probabilities ...

The Frequencies Objection



...they are, in fact,
particularly ill-suited
for the purposes of
calculating the prior
probability of the
Resurrection!

The Frequencies Objection



The problem, of course, is that for all or almost all of us the observational frequency of resurrections is strictly zero...

The Frequencies Objection



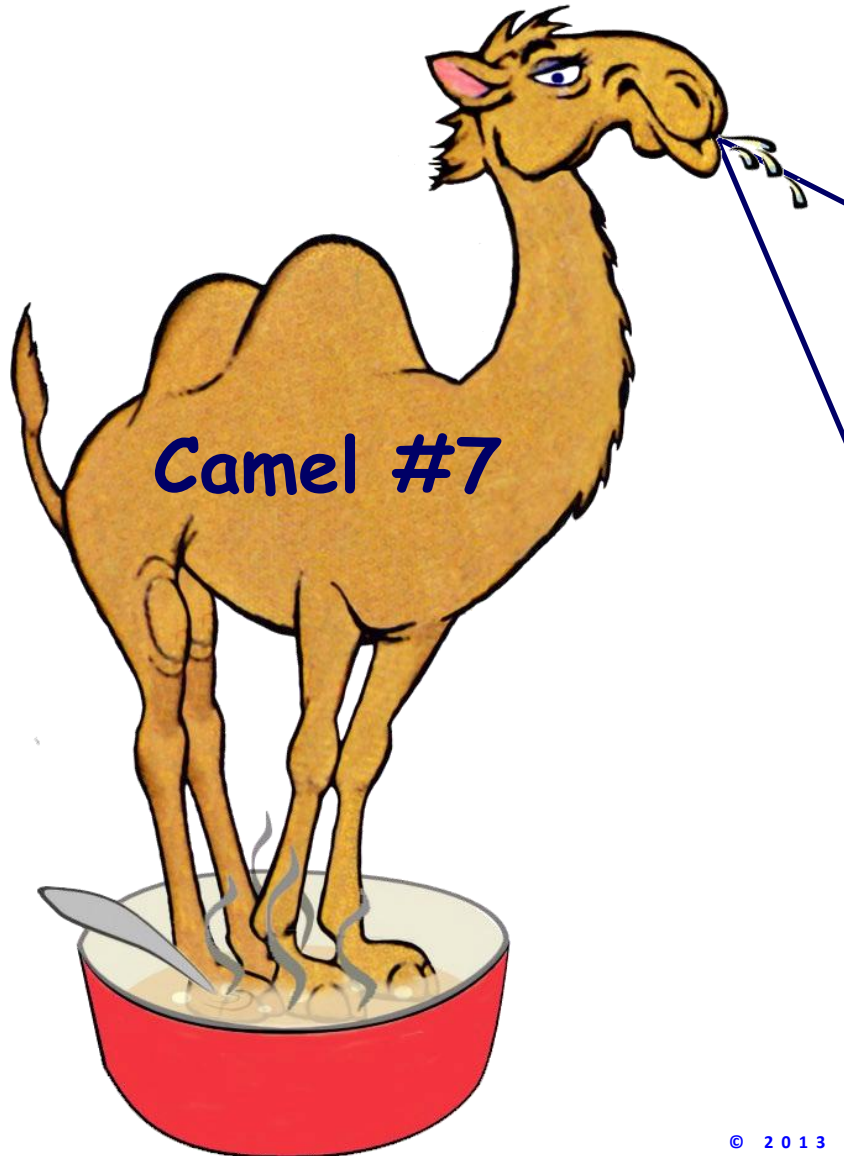
...yet Inferential
Statistics **does not**
permit us to calculate
a strictly **zero prior**
probability from
(finite) observational
frequencies of **zero!**

The Frequencies Objection



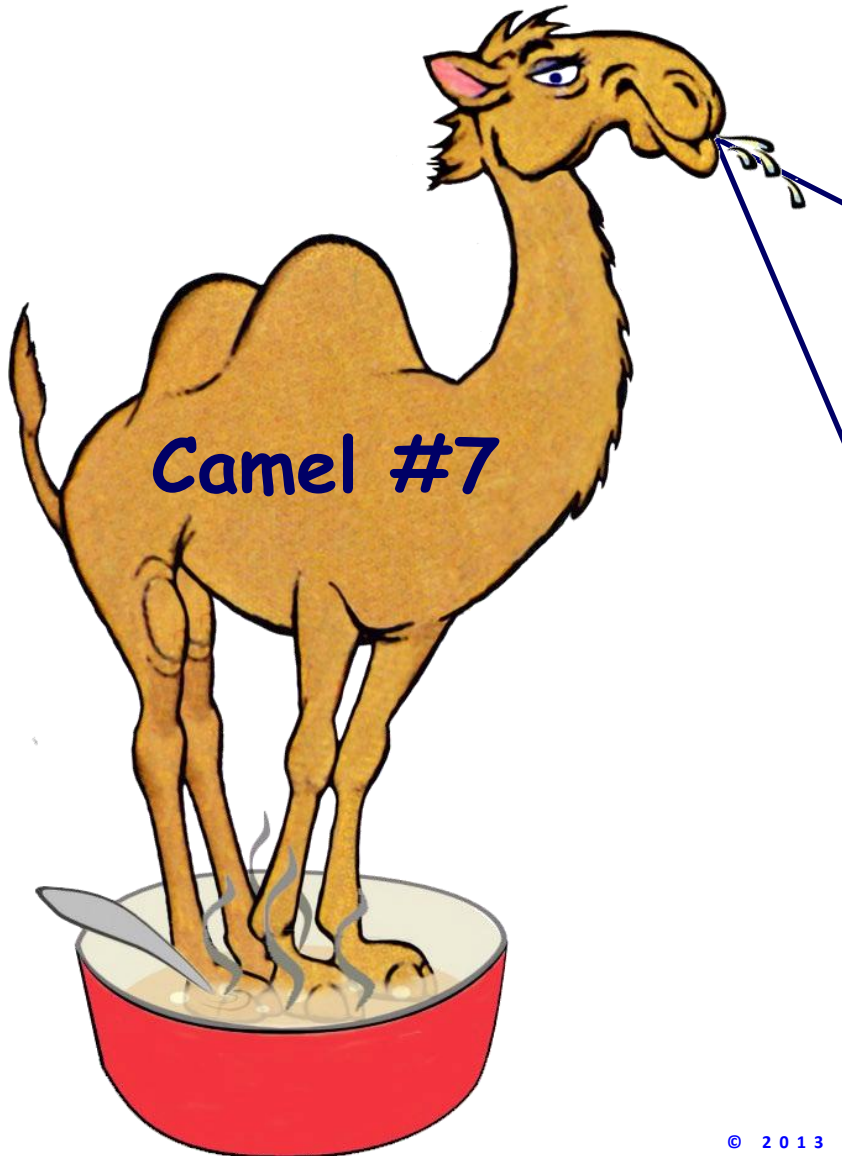
More importantly, as we shall see next, scientific considerations show that the Resurrection has a non-zero, albeit astronomically small, prior probability!

The Science Objection



Science
cannot prove
that the
Resurrection
is Improbable

The Science Objection



Camel #7

Science
cannot prove
that the
Resurrection
is Improbable

The Science Objection

Science **cannot** be used
to try to show that the
Resurrection theory has
**a low antecedent
probability!**



The Science Objection



You're **wrong** because
you are **ignoring**
Natural Revelation
and the **Via**
Negativa, which
includes what we
know about the
World and God
through **Science!**

The Science Objection



The supernatural Resurrection of Jesus by God violates the Second Law of Thermodynamics and thus has an astronomically low prior probability!

The Science Objection



The Second Law of
Thermodynamics tells
us that:

the entropy of a
physically isolated
system is always
increasing.

The Science Objection



Now, since the supernatural realm, e.g., **God**, is **non-physical**, it lacks **mass-energy**, thus making the **Universe a physically isolated system!**

The Science Objection



The Science Objection

Even if **God** exists...



The Science Objection

Even if God exists,
He is not physical...



The Science Objection

Even if **God exists**,
He is **not physical**,
and thus **lacks energy**...



The Science Objection

Even if **God exists**,
He is **not physical**,
and thus **lacks energy**,
and so cannot **exchange**
energy...



The Science Objection

Even if **God exists**,
He is **not physical**,
and thus **lacks energy**,
and so cannot **exchange**
energy in any form with
the Universe!



The Science Objection

Even if **God exists**,
He is **not physical**,
and thus **lacks energy**,
and so cannot **exchange**
energy in any form with
the **Universe!**



The Science Objection

Even if **God exists**,
He is **not physical**,
and thus **lacks energy**,
and so cannot **exchange**
energy in any form with
the Universe!



The Universe is thus...

The Science Objection

Even if **God exists**,
He is **not physical**,
and thus **lacks energy**,
and so cannot **exchange**
energy in any form with
the **Universe!**



The Universe is thus
physically isolated...

The Science Objection

Even if **God exists**,
He is **not physical**,
and thus **lacks energy**,
and so cannot **exchange**
energy in any form with
the **Universe!**



The Universe is thus
physically isolated: there is
nothing with which it can
exchange energy in any form!

The Science Objection

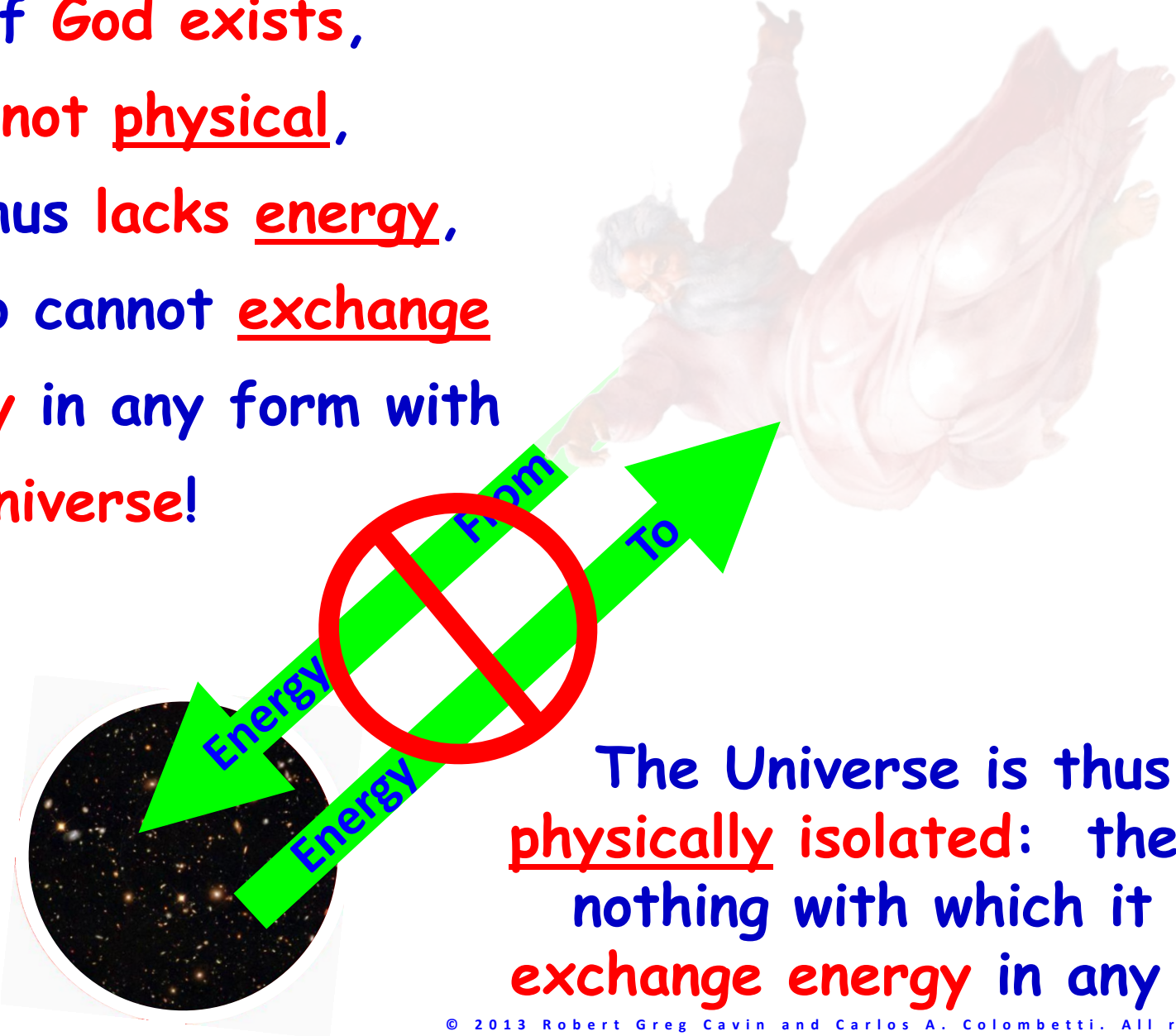
Even if **God exists**,
He is **not physical**,
and thus **lacks energy**,
and so cannot **exchange**
energy in any form with
the **Universe!**



The Universe is thus
physically isolated: there is
nothing with which it can
exchange energy in any form!

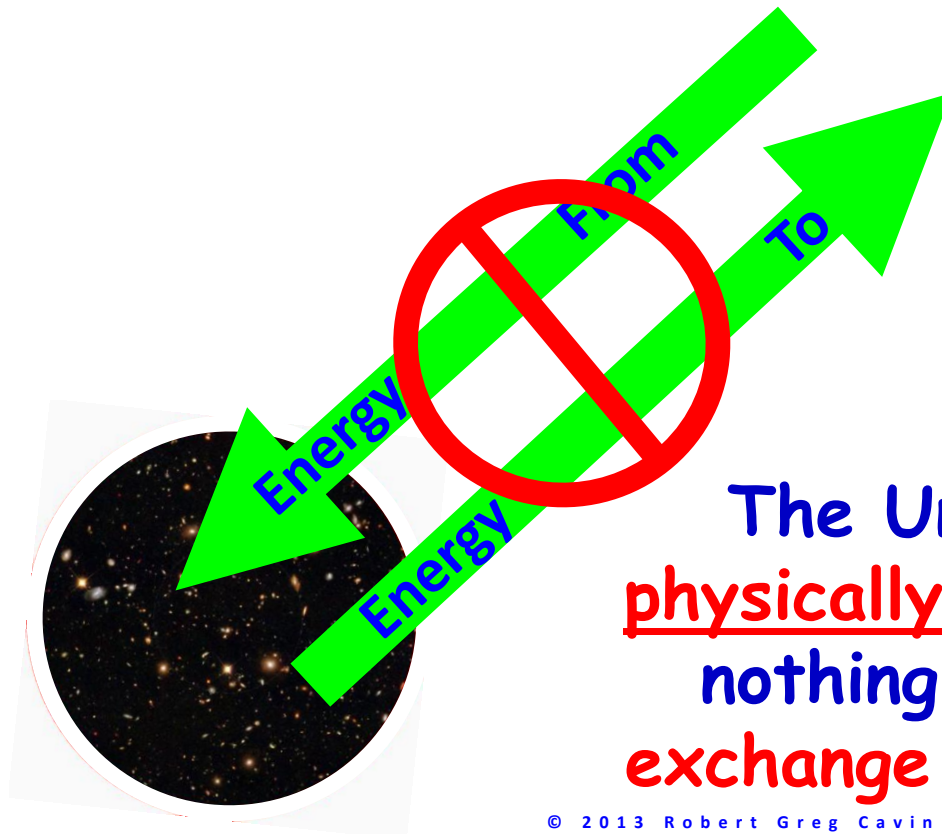
The Science Objection

Even if **God exists**,
He is **not physical**,
and thus **lacks energy**,
and so cannot **exchange**
energy in any form with
the **Universe!**



The Universe is thus
physically isolated: there is
nothing with which it can
exchange energy in any form!

The Science Objection



The Universe is thus physically isolated: there is nothing with which it can exchange energy in any form!

The Science Objection



The Universe is thus
physically isolated: there is
nothing with which it can
exchange energy in any form!

The Science Objection



The Science Objection



Thus, even if **God exists...**

The Science Objection



...it makes **no scientific**
difference!

The Science Objection



The Universe is still
a physically isolated system!

The Science Objection



But, the entropy of
the Universe
markedly decreases
in a supernatural
resurrection from
the dead!

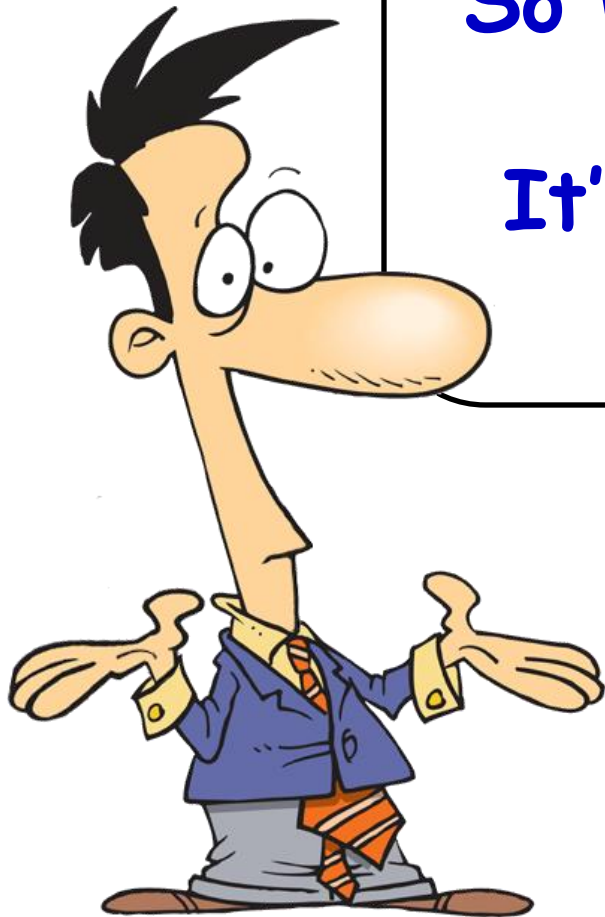
The Science Objection



Thus, the
supernatural
Resurrection of Jesus
by God violates
the Second Law of
Thermodynamics!

The Science Objection

Gottcha!
So what if the Universe is
physically isolated?
It's **not causally** isolated
from God!



The Science Objection

You're right—but
that **doesn't matter!**
The Second Law of
Thermodynamics has
been shown to hold for
physically isolated
systems—even if they
are **not** causally isolated,
e.g., from God.



The Science Objection

The Second Law as part of the **Via Negativa** thus shows that God **chooses not** to supernaturally interfere with **physically isolated systems!**



The Science Objection



This argument can be given a **much deeper** formulation in terms of the science of **Statistical Mechanics.**

The Science Objection



Statistical Mechanics
tells us that all
microstates having
the same energy have
the same equal
prior probability.

The Science Objection



This is known as the
Postulate of Equal
A Priori Probabilities.

The Science Objection



However, the name
"Postulate of Equal
A Priori Probabilities"
is a misnomer.

The Science Objection



It's actually a well-established empirical hypothesis whose justification lies in its ability to explain an amazing range of facts from various fields of science.

The Science Objection



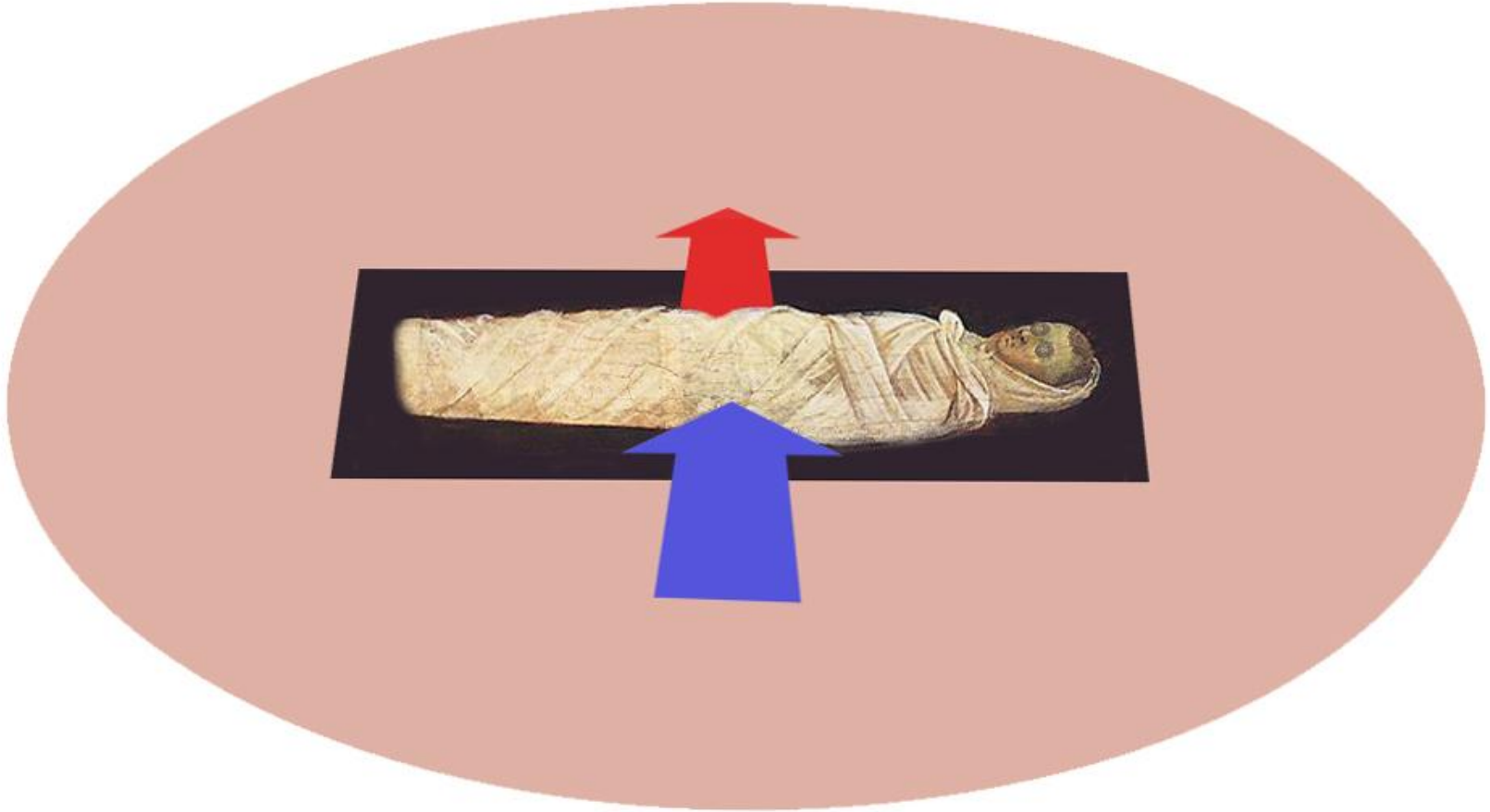
Statistical Mechanics
thus tells us that,
even if God has
a chosen people,
He has **no chosen**
microstates—that is,
all microstates
having **the same**
energy have the
same
prior probability!

The Science Objection



The microstates of
the corpse of Jesus
together with its
surroundings
were of equal energy
since this was merely
exchanged in various
forms back and forth
between the two.

The Science Objection



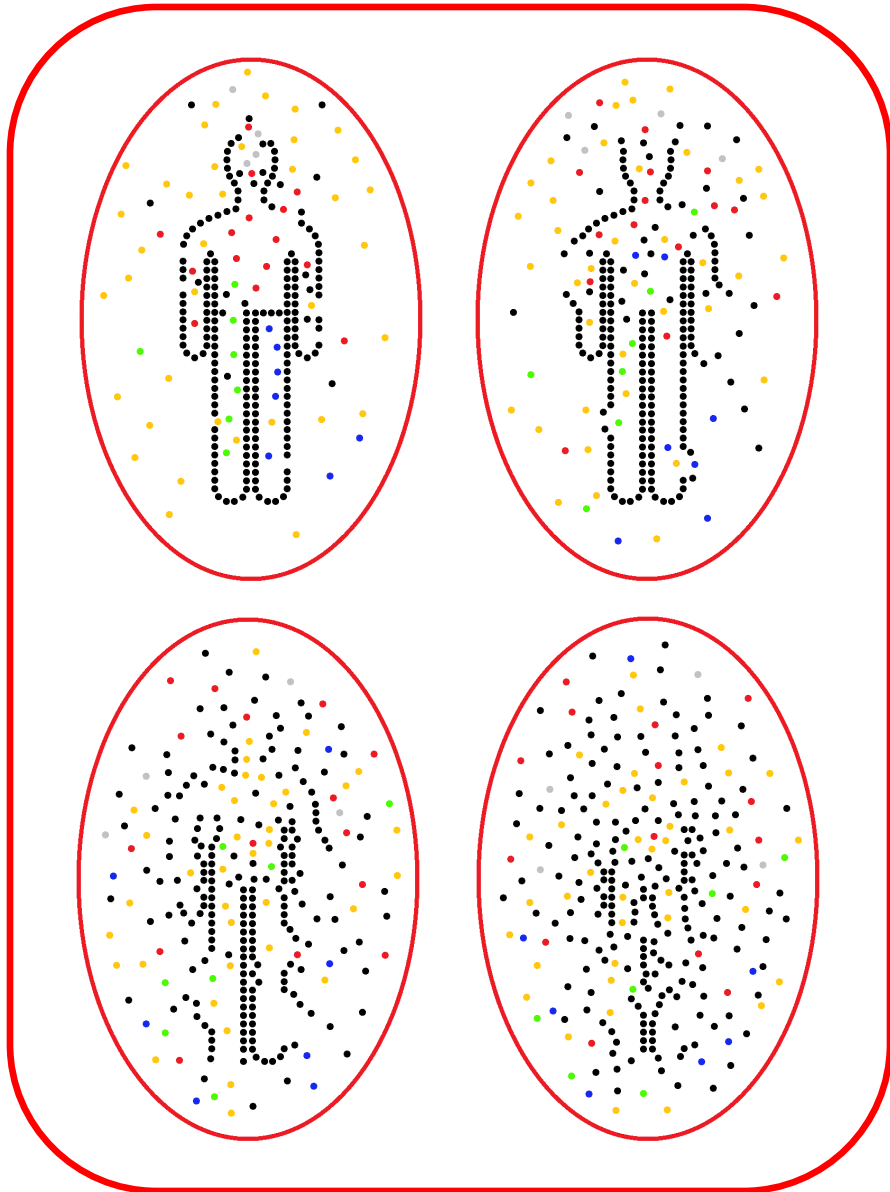
Total Energy of Microstates of body of Jesus
together with its Surroundings is **Constant**

The Science Objection

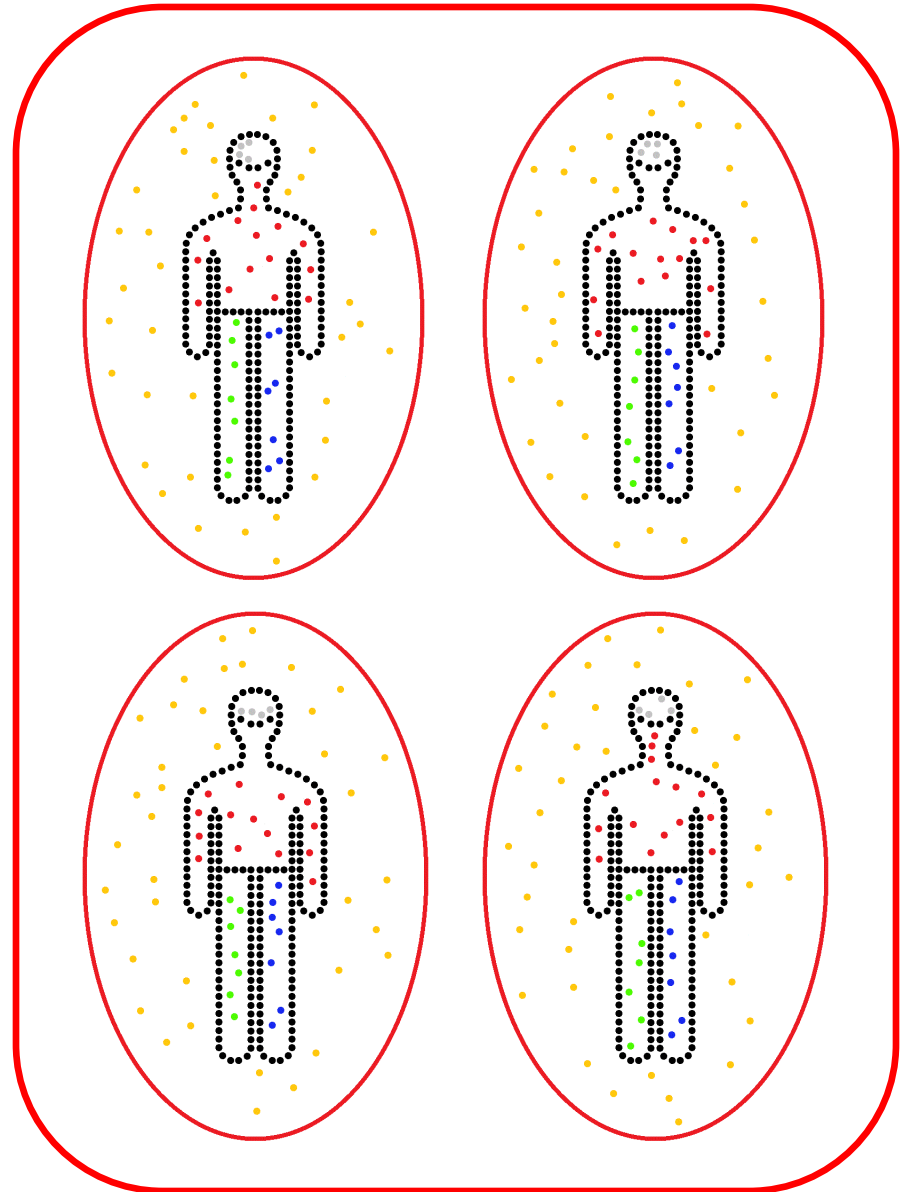


But the **equally probable** microstates in which the corpse of Jesus is dead **vastly outnumber** those in which his body is alive!

Statistical Mechanics & the Prior Probability of Death, Decomposition, & Resurrection

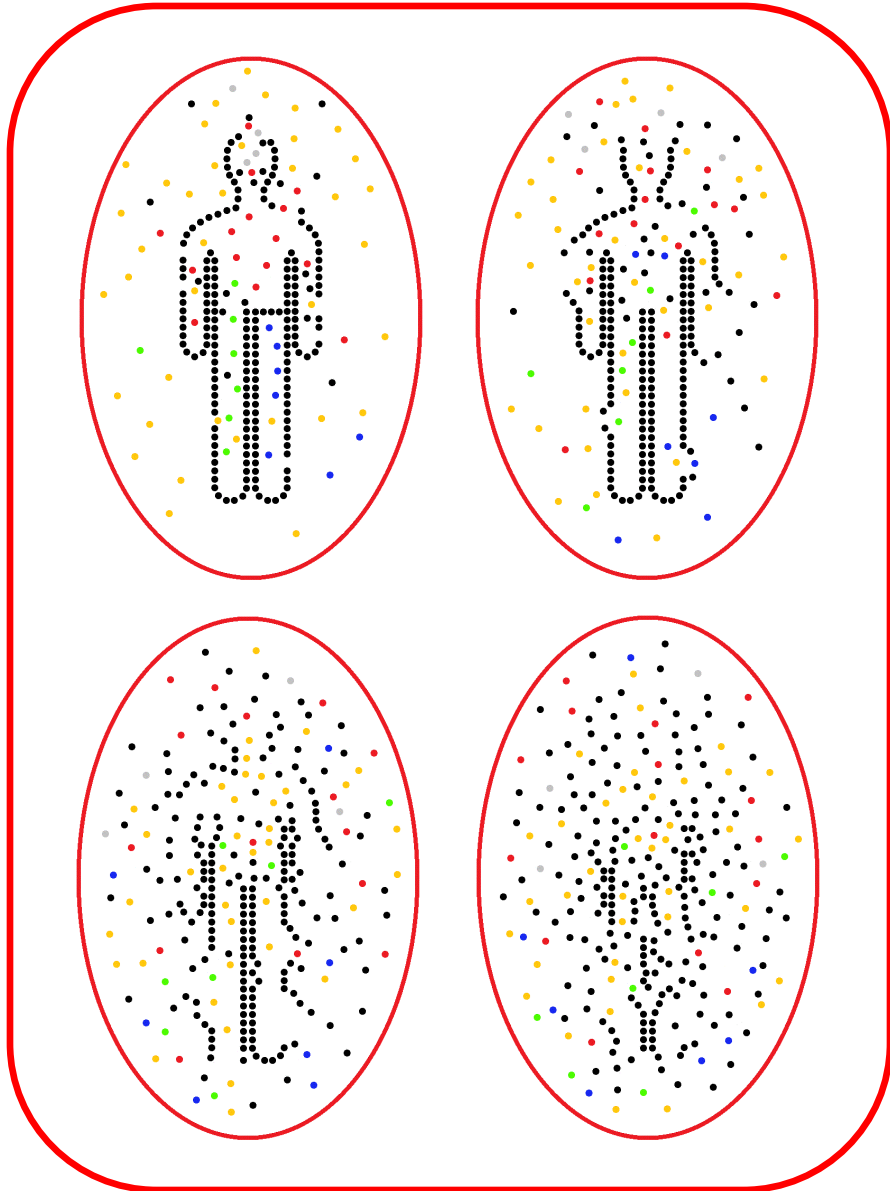


Microstates of Death

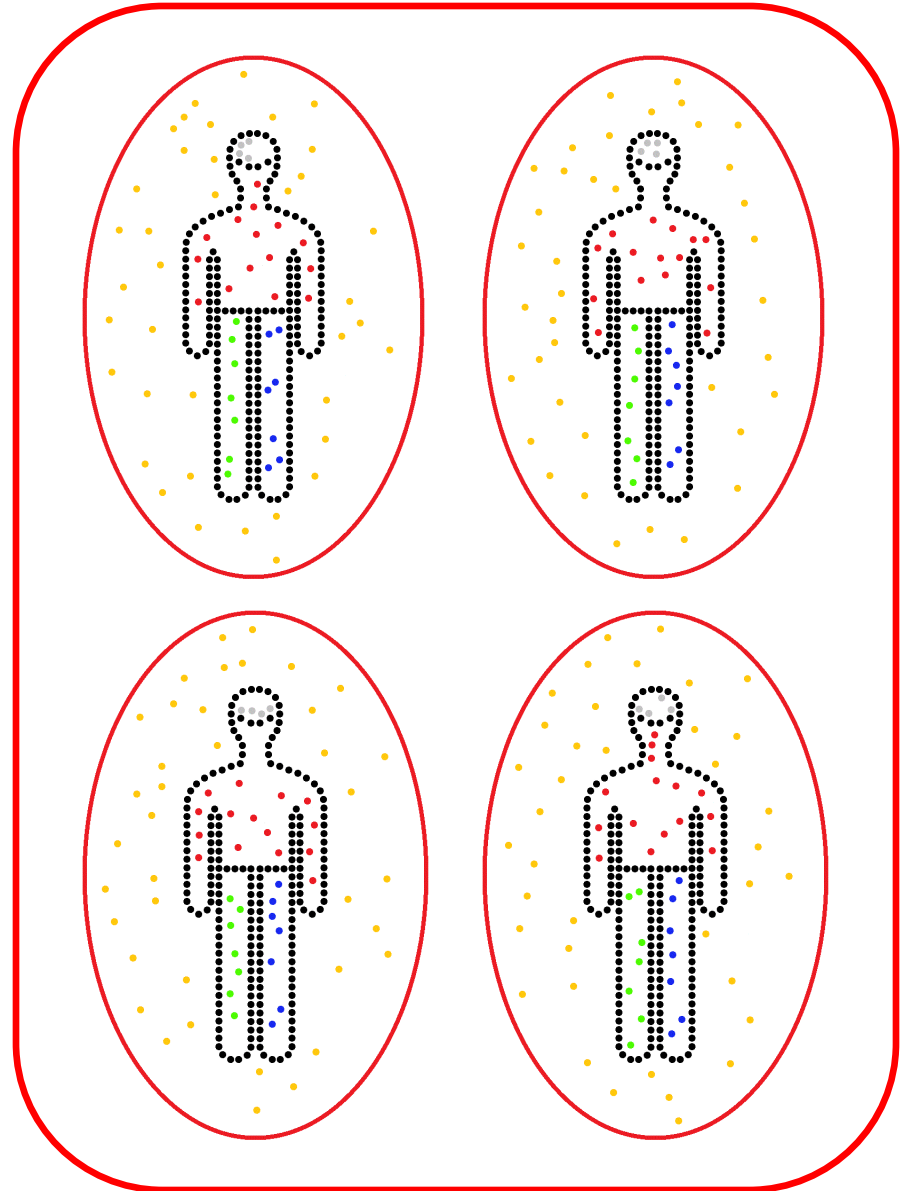


Microstates of Life

Statistical Mechanics & the Prior Probability of Death, Decomposition, & Resurrection

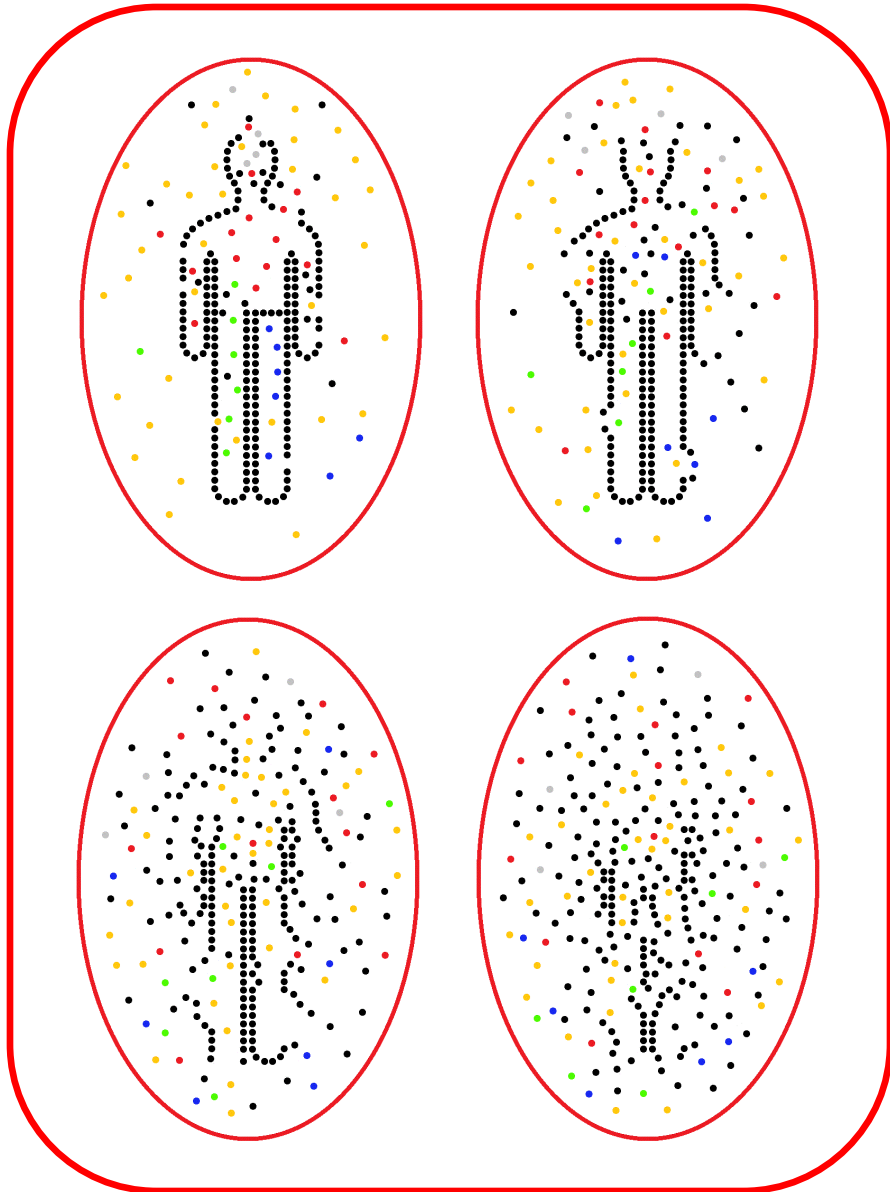


Decomartmentalization

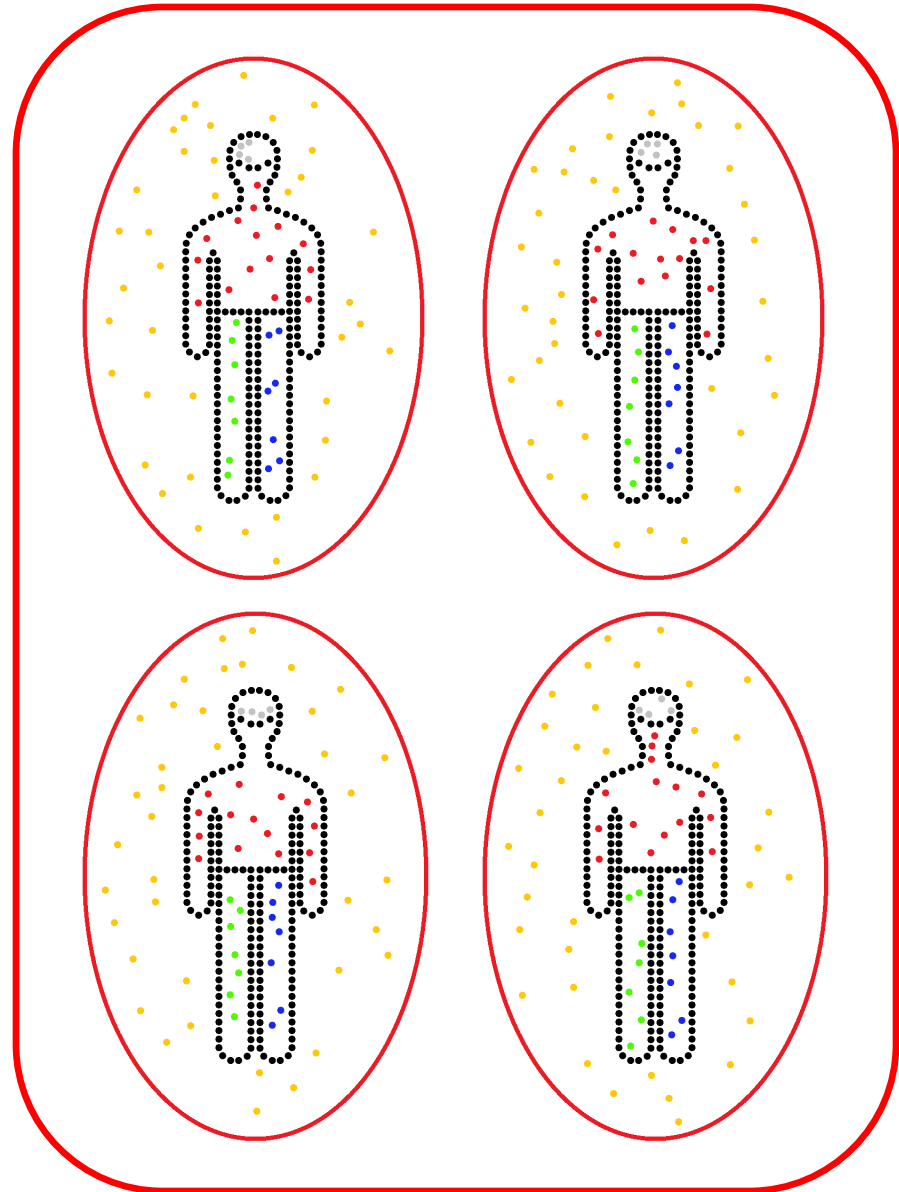


Compartmentalization

Statistical Mechanics & the Prior Probability of Death, Decomposition, & Resurrection



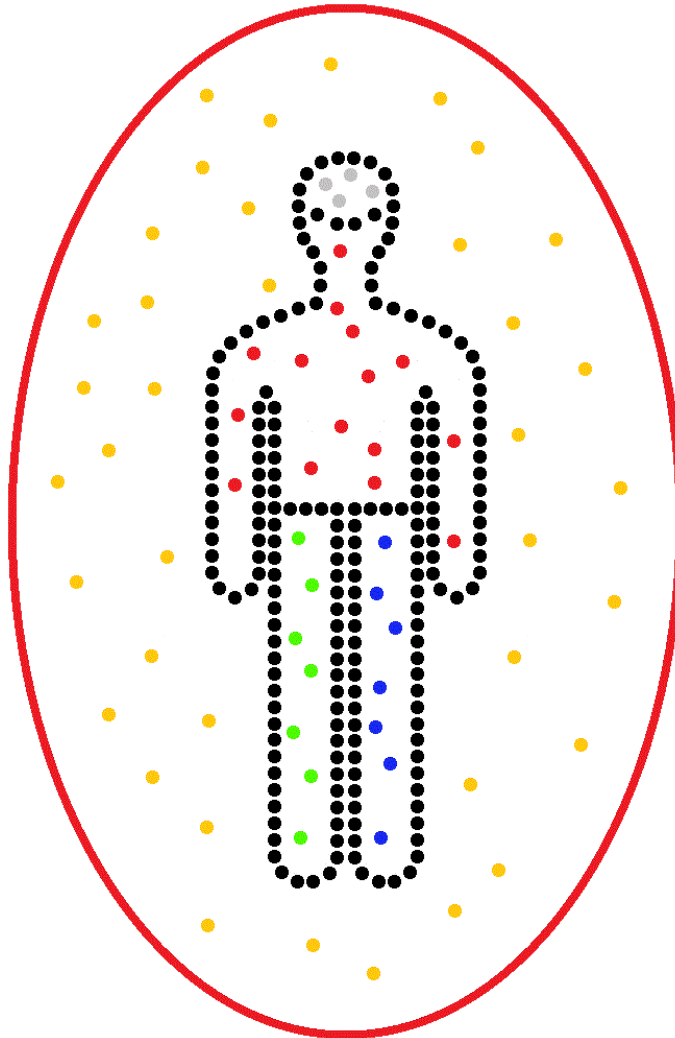
Gazillions of These!



Comparatively Few of These!

Statistical Mechanics & the Prior Probability of Death, Decomposition, & Resurrection

Energy is simply **exchanged** between the body and its surroundings, so all microstates of their combined system have **equal energy**.

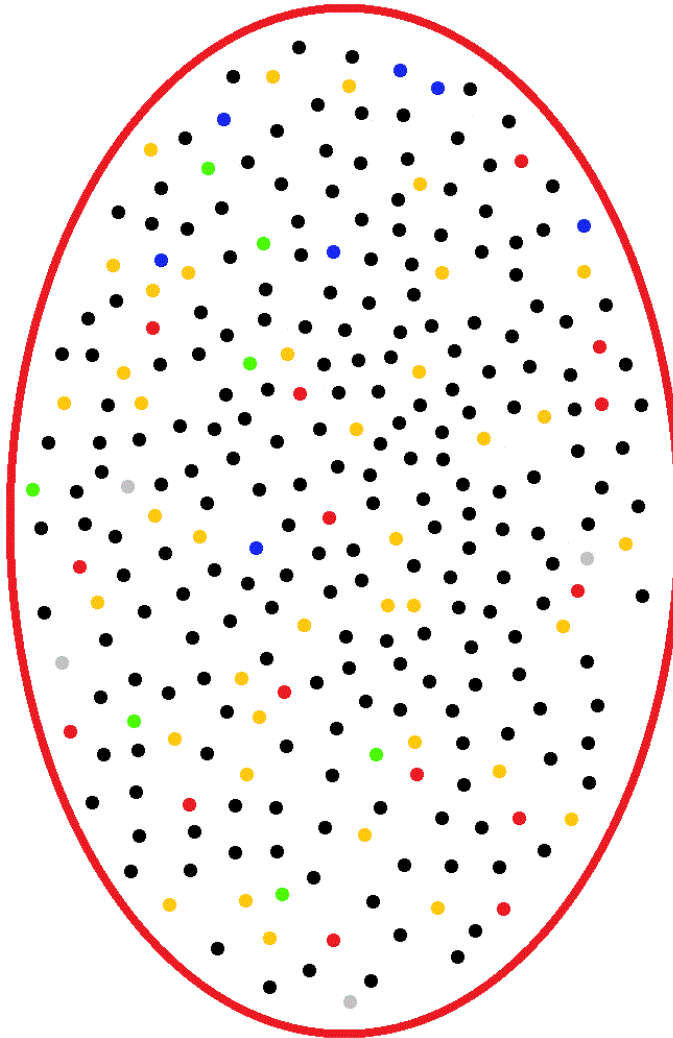


Because all the microstates have **equal energy**, the Postulate of Equal "A Priori" Probabilities applies, and thus all the microstates have **equal prior probability**.

Because the number of microstates instantiating death and decomposition is **vastly greater** than those instantiating life, the **prior probability** that the body will **die and undergo complete decomposition** is **virtually 100%**.

Statistical Mechanics & the Prior Probability of Death, Decomposition, & Resurrection

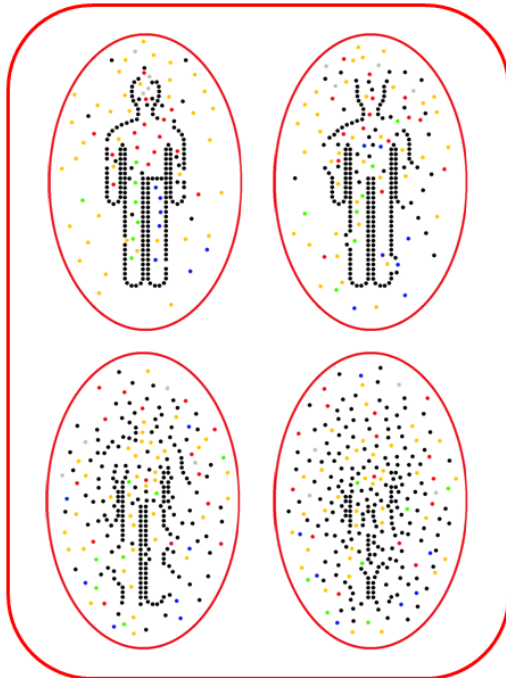
Energy is simply **exchanged** between the body and its surroundings, so all microstates of their combined system have **equal energy**.



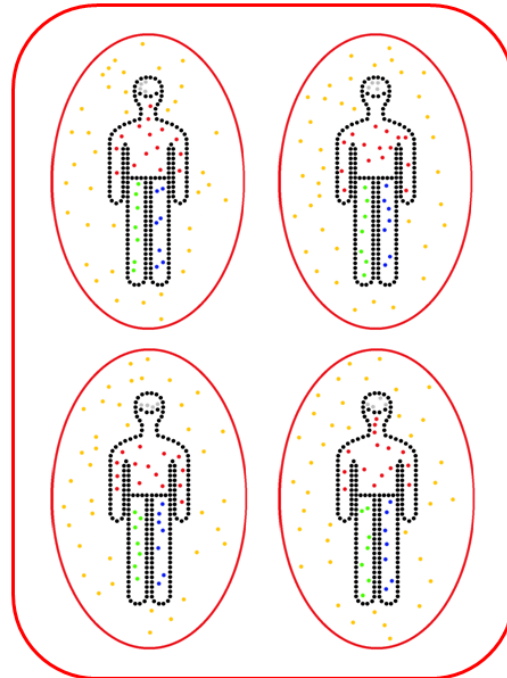
Because all the microstates have **equal energy**, the Postulate of Equal "A Priori" Probabilities applies, and thus all the microstates have **equal prior probability**.

Because the number of microstates instantiating death and decomposition is **vastly greater** than those instantiating life, the **prior probability** that the corpse will **not resurrect** is **virtually 100%**.

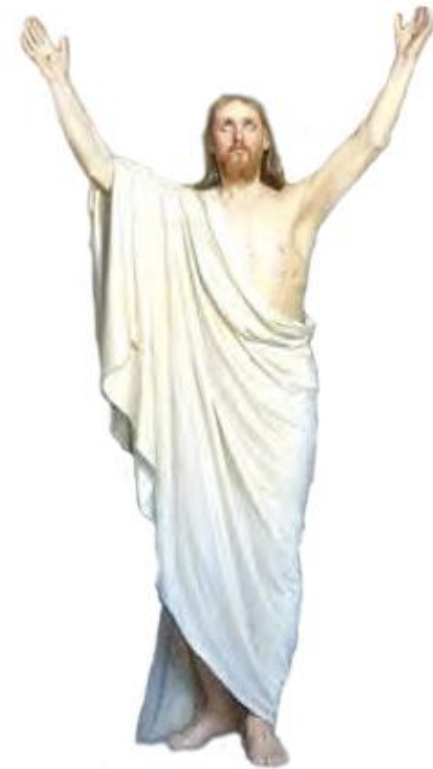
The Science Objection



Gazillions of These!



Comparatively Few of These!



The number of **microstates** ("ways") in which the constituents of the body of Jesus form **a corpse** astronomically exceeds the number of **microstates** ("ways") in which they form a living body.

The Science Objection



Thus, it follows that
the **prior** probability
of a specifically
supernatural
Resurrection of Jesus
by **God** is
astronomically low!

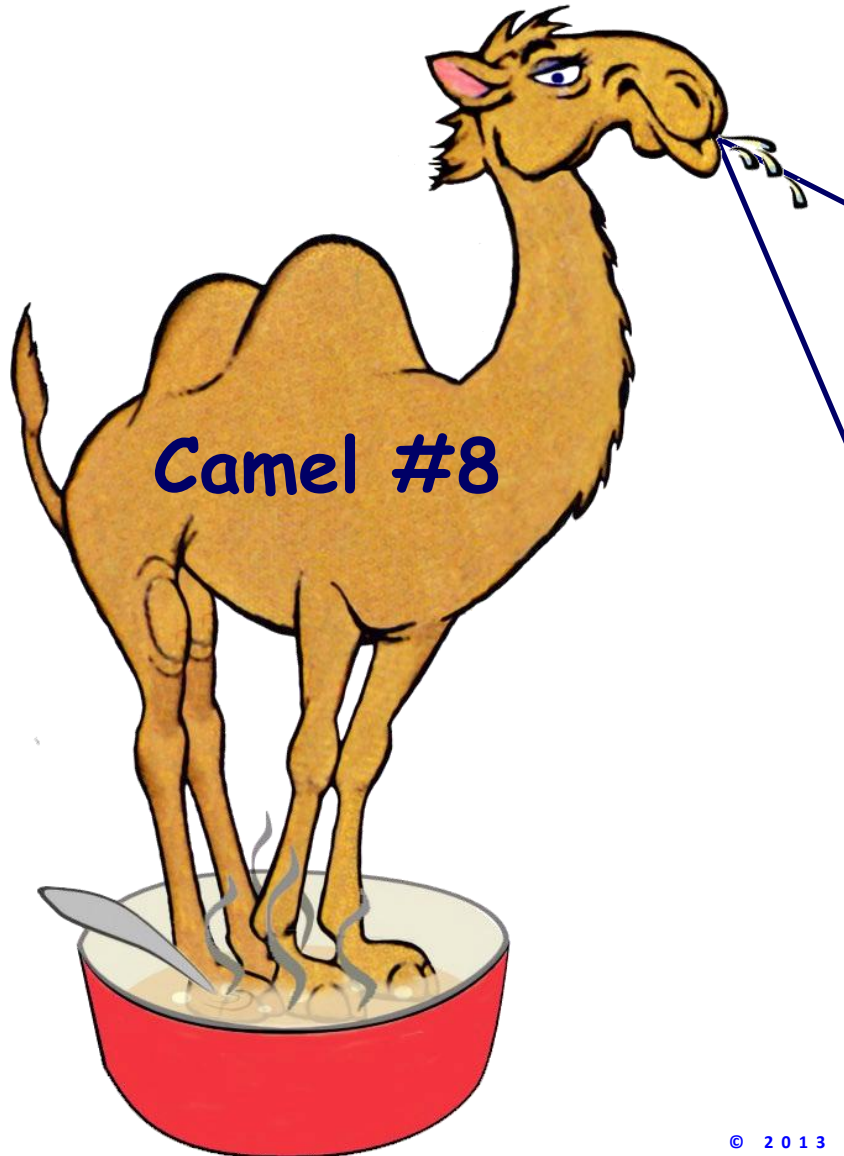
The Science Objection



This, of course,
has nothing to
do with
observational-
relative
frequencies!

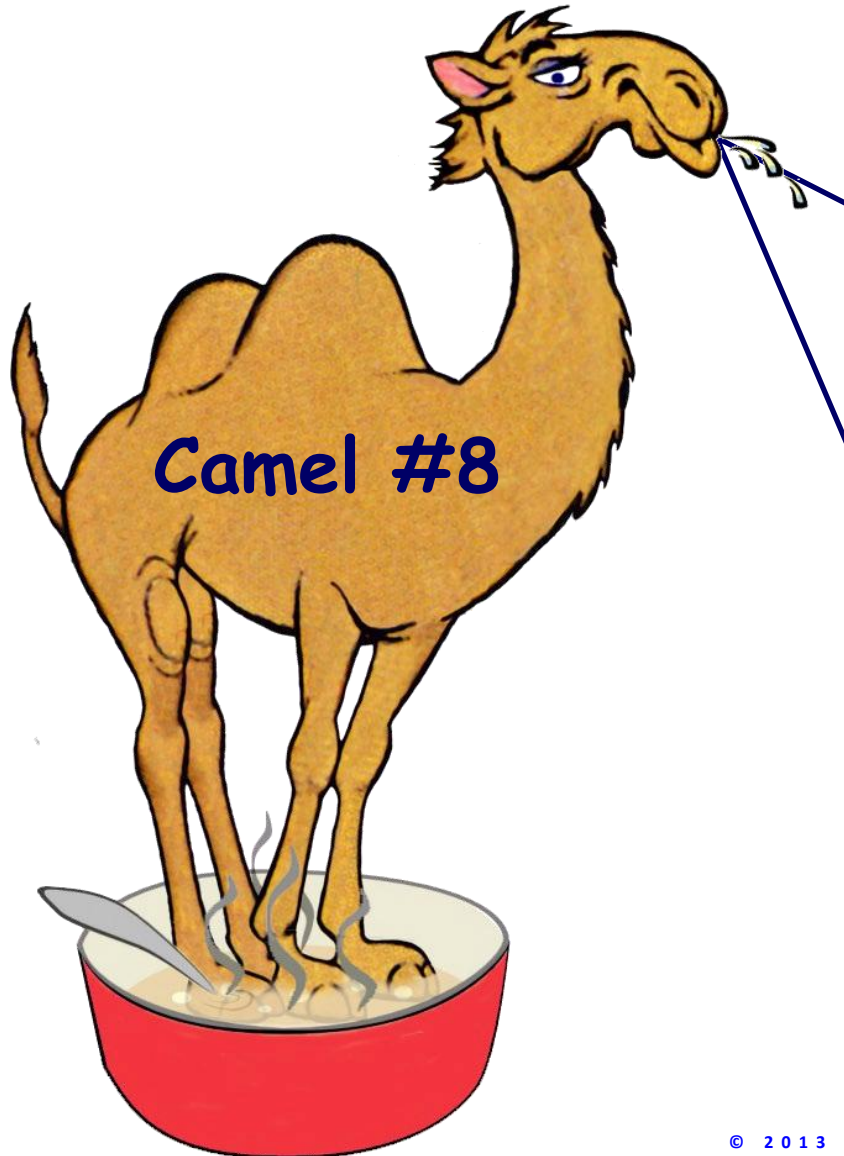
Μὴ γένοιτο!

The Total Evidence Objection



The Prior
Probability of the
Resurrection is
Inscrutable
because the Total
Relevant Evidence
isn't Available

The Total Evidence Objection



The Prior
Probability of the
Resurrection is
Inscrutable
because the Total
Relevant Evidence
isn't Available

The Total Evidence Objection

Your argument can't be right!
Prior probability **must** be based
on
the total evidence—
something we don't possess!



The Total Evidence Objection

No, you
misunderstand
the Total Evidence
Requirement!



The Total Evidence Objection

It does **not** state:
“The **total** relevant
evidence must be used in
reaching a conclusion.”



The Total Evidence Objection

That's **preposterous!**
We never have
the **total** relevant
evidence on **any** subject.



The Total Evidence Objection

Your error is to leave
out the crucial word:

"available"!



The Total Evidence Objection

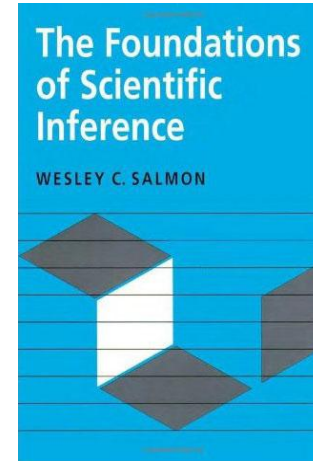
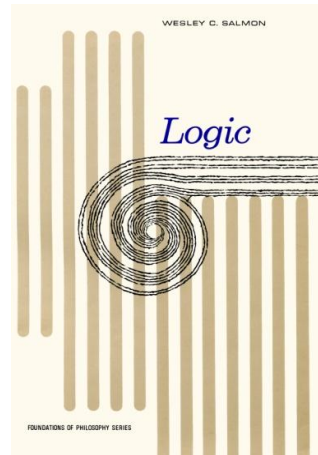
What the requirement states is:

"The total **available** relevant evidence must be used in reaching a conclusion."



The Total Evidence Objection

Please see:



by the great Inductive Logician,
Wesley C. Salmon (1925-2001)



The Total Evidence Objection

And my argument—
based on the evidence
of **Natural Theology**—
states the **total**
relevant available
evidence!



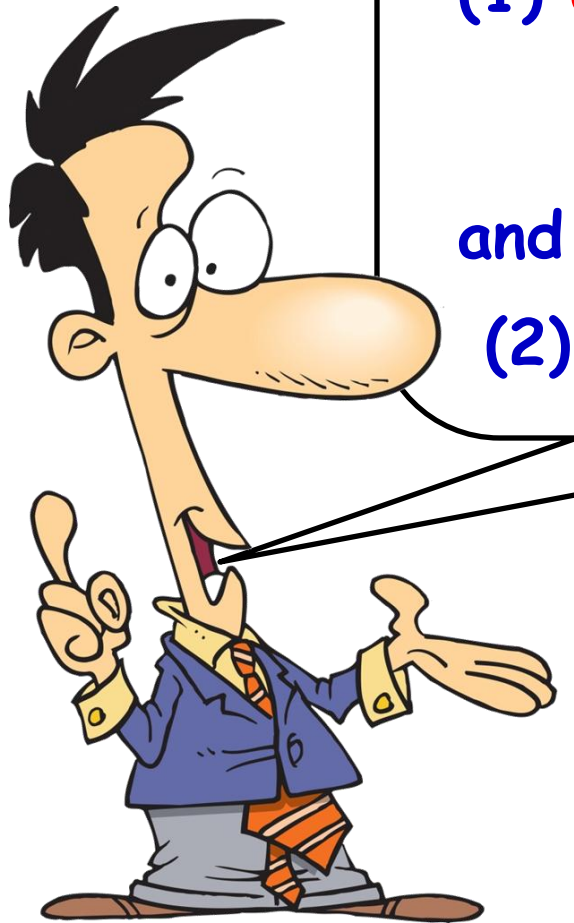
The Total Evidence Objection

And this all boils down to the following:

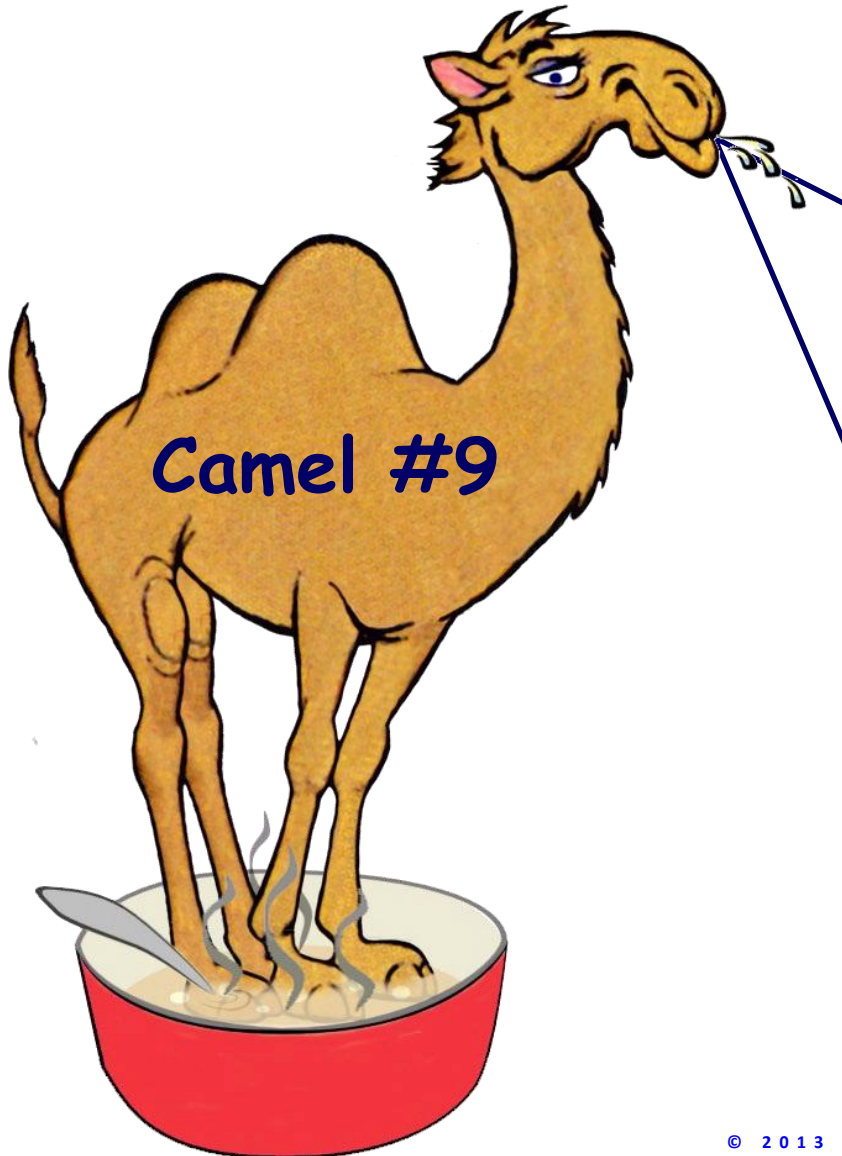
(1) God has an extraordinarily strong tendency not to supernaturally raise the dead.

and

(2) Jesus was dead.

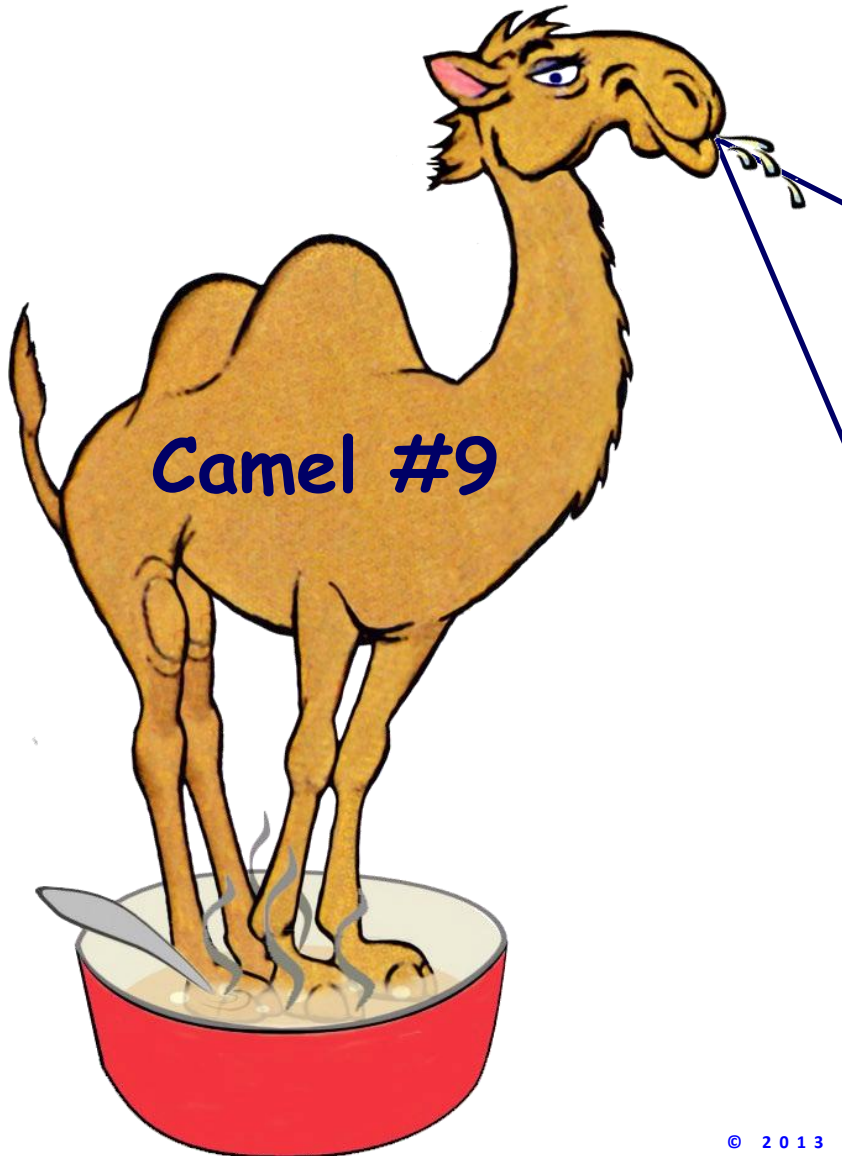


The Religio-Historical Context Objection



The Skeptic
ignores the
Religio-
Historical
Context of the
Resurrection

The Religio-Historical Context Objection



The Skeptic
ignores the
Religio-
Historical
Context of the
Resurrection

The Religio-Historical Context Objection

I gottcha now!

You leave out the
evidence comprising **the
Religio-Historical Context**
of the Resurrection.



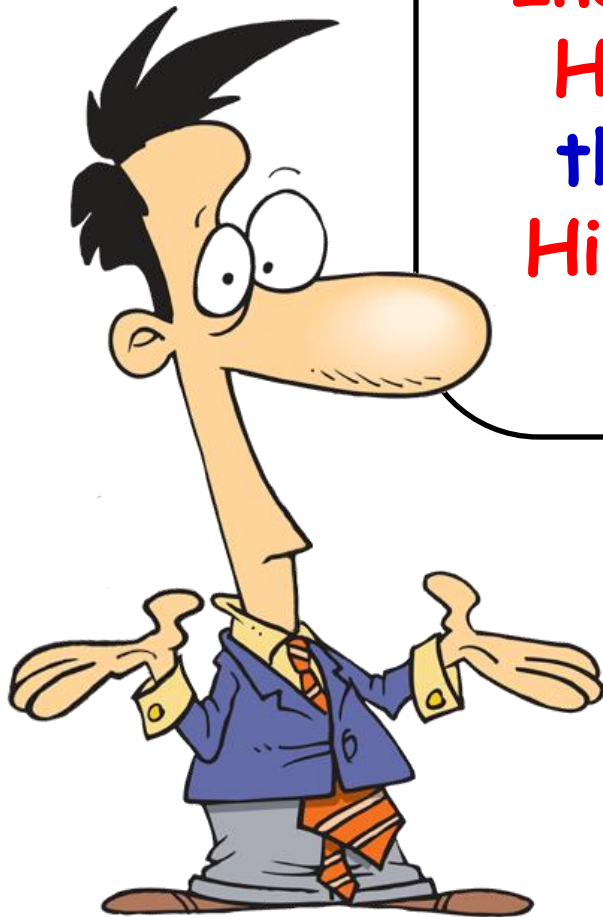
The Religio-Historical Context Objection

This includes the message, ministry, messianic claims, fulfilled prophecies, miracles, and sinless life of Jesus and how these fit into the Heilsgeschichte of Israel.



The Religio-Historical Context Objection

You leave out, crucially, the evidence that **Jesus is the Incarnate Son of God**, that **He died for our sins**, and that **God needed to raise Him** so that we would know these things.



The Religio-Historical Context Objection

These aren't items
of available evidence—
they're clearly
dogmas of faith!



The Religio-Historical Context Objection



The sinless life and miracles of Jesus are **highly questionable**, and, to paraphrase NT scholar James M. Robinson, the OT gives us **prophecies** the NT **never fulfills** while the NT gives us **"fulfillments"** the OT **never prophesied!**

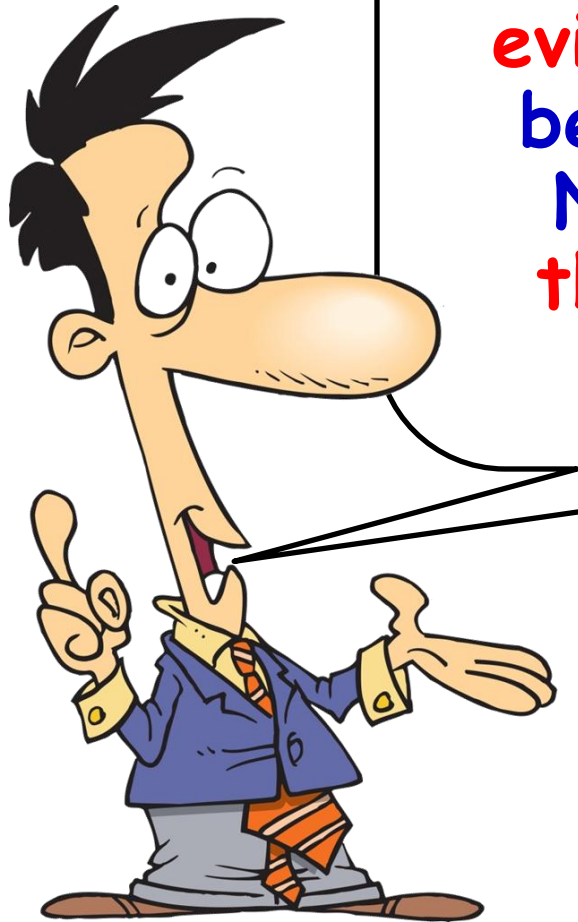
The Religio-Historical Context Objection

Available evidence must be more probable than its denial—and these items, at the very best, are equal in probability to their denials.

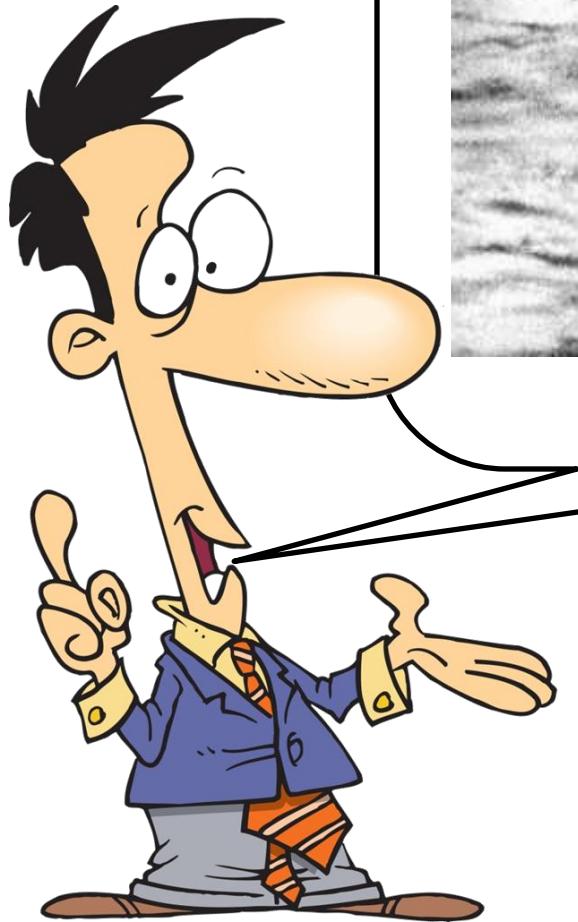


The Religio-Historical Context Objection

For example, one can't cite the existence of the Loch Ness Monster as "available evidence" against Evolution because the existence of Nessie is a mere belief that isn't more probable than its denial.



The Religio-Historical Context Objection



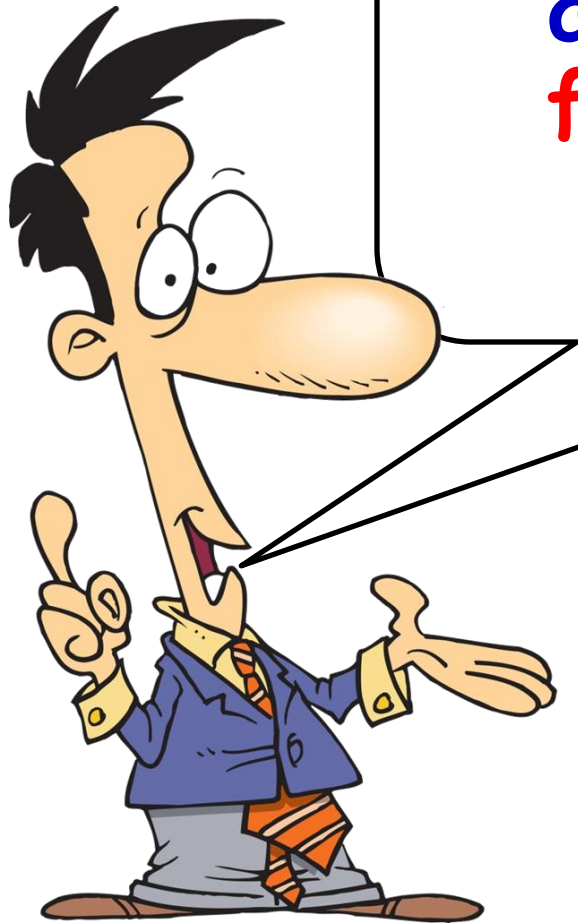
The Religio-Historical Context Objection

I'm **not denying** that Jesus is the Son of God, that He died for our sins, or that the Resurrection was God's "super-miracle" to show this.




The Religio-Historical Context Objection

My point is that these
are mere **dogmas** of
faith—not bona fide
available evidence!



The Religio-Historical Context Objection



Thus, it's **not** that the skeptic **ignores** the "Religio-Historical Context"—it simply **doesn't exist!**

The Religio-Historical Context Objection



Given the non-existence of the "Religio-Historical Context," your appeal to the **supernatural** intervention of God is a **Deus ex Machina!**

Θεός από μηχανής



The Religio-Historical Context Objection



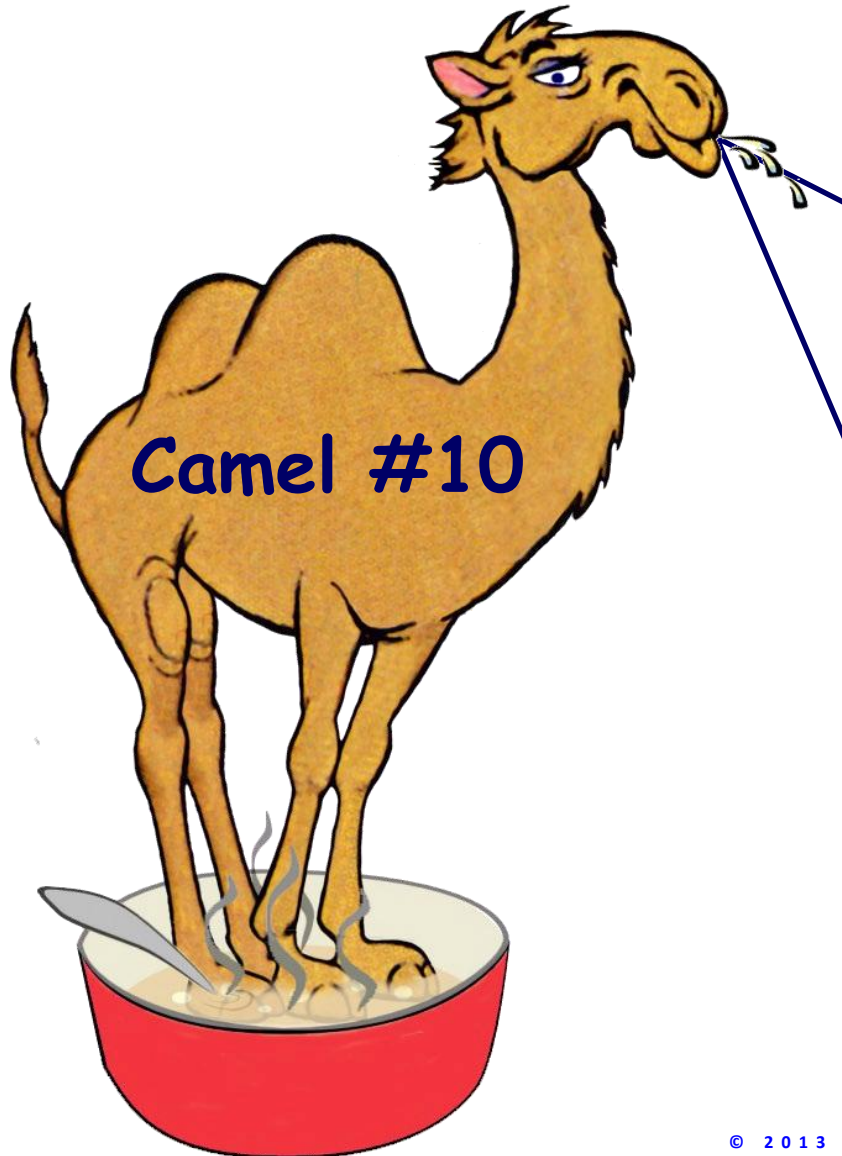
Given the available
evidence, it is clear
that the prior
probability of the
Supernatural
Resurrection of Jesus
is astronomically low!

The Reference Class Objection



It is impossible
to determine
the Correct
Reference
Class for the
Resurrection

The Reference Class Objection



It is impossible
to determine
the correct
Reference
Class for the
Resurrection

The Reference Class Objection

The correct “reference class” for the Resurrection is determined by our total relevant available evidence—just given above.

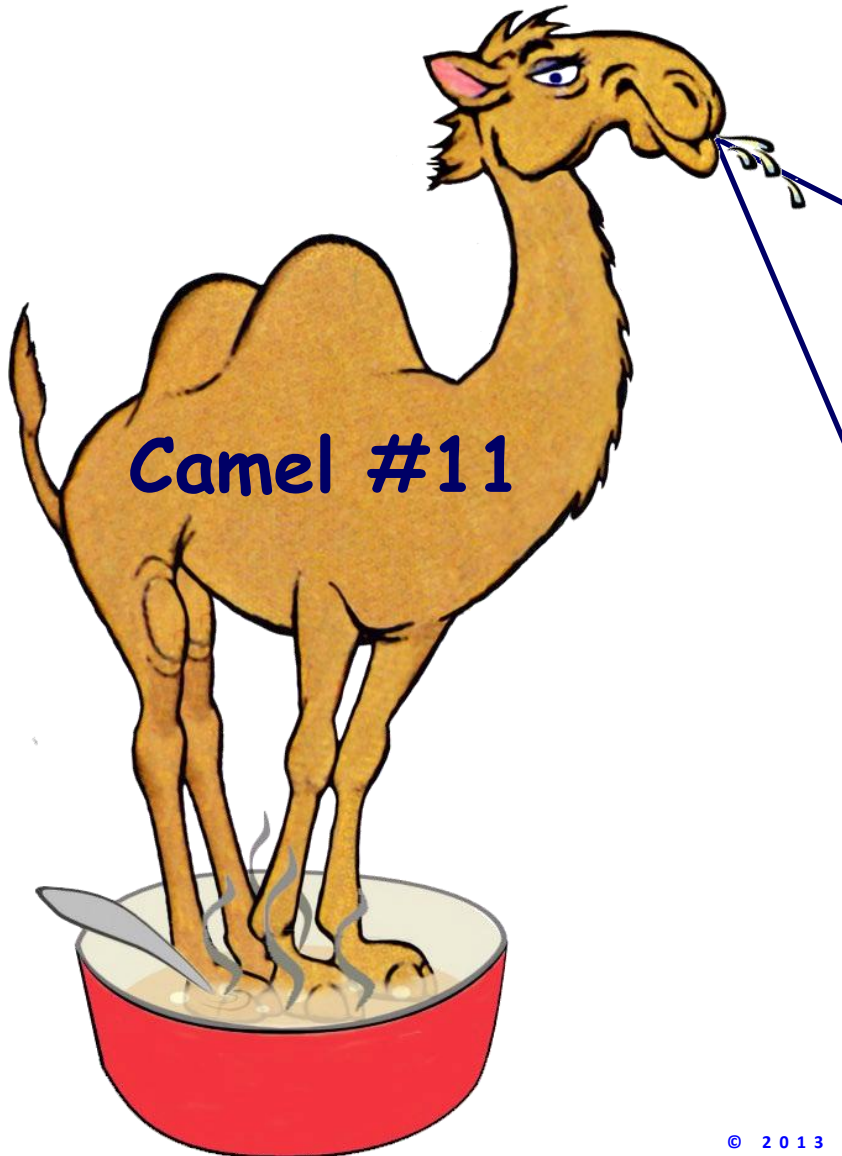


The Naturalism Objection



The Anti-
Resurrectionist
assumes the
Truth of
Naturalism!

The Naturalism Objection



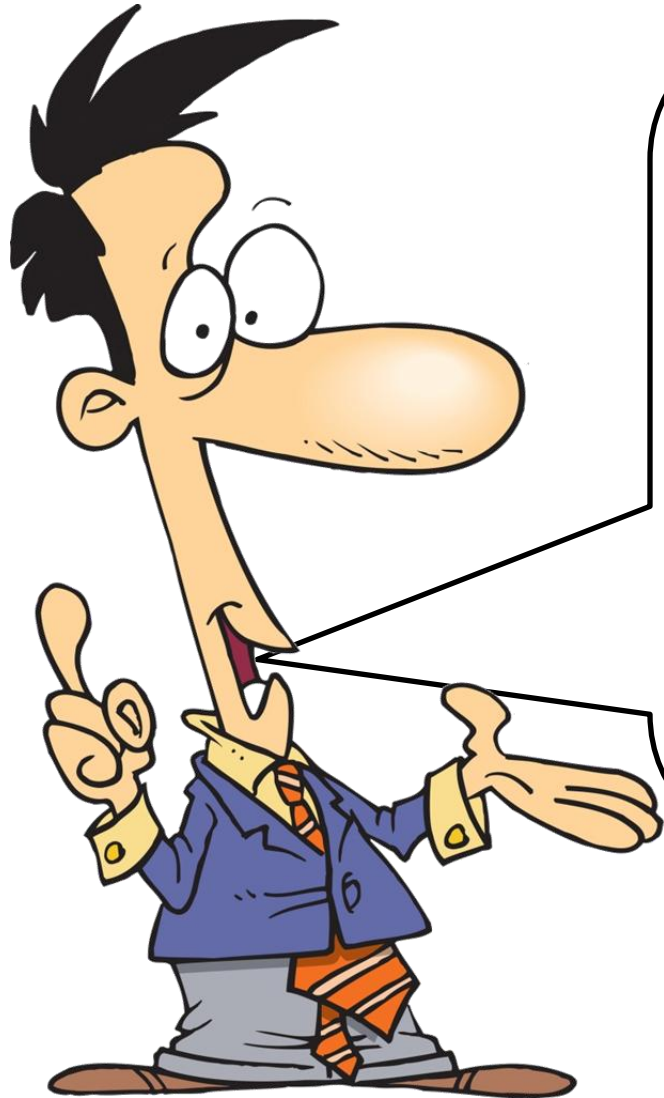
The Anti-Resurrectionist assumes the Truth of Naturalism!

The Naturalism Objection



Some skeptics do
reject the
Resurrection on the
basis of
anti-supernaturalist
metaphysical
presuppositions.

The Naturalism Objection



But it is **clear**
that my
argument does
not!

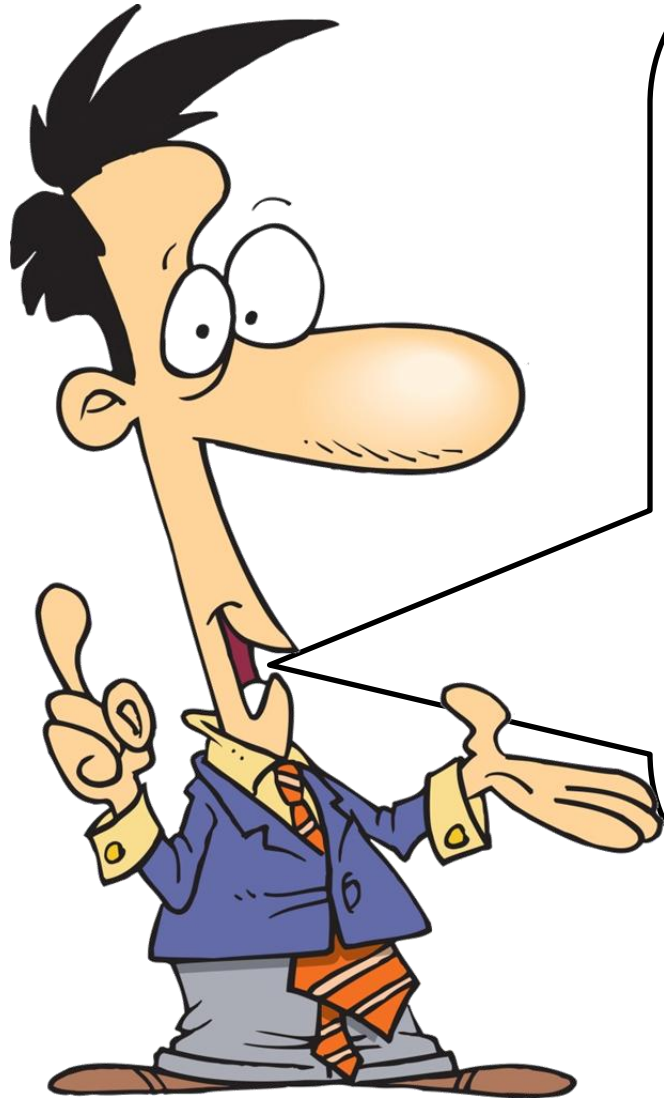
The Naturalism Objection



Resurrectionists must
be careful to avoid
committing what
Cavin and Colombetti
call:

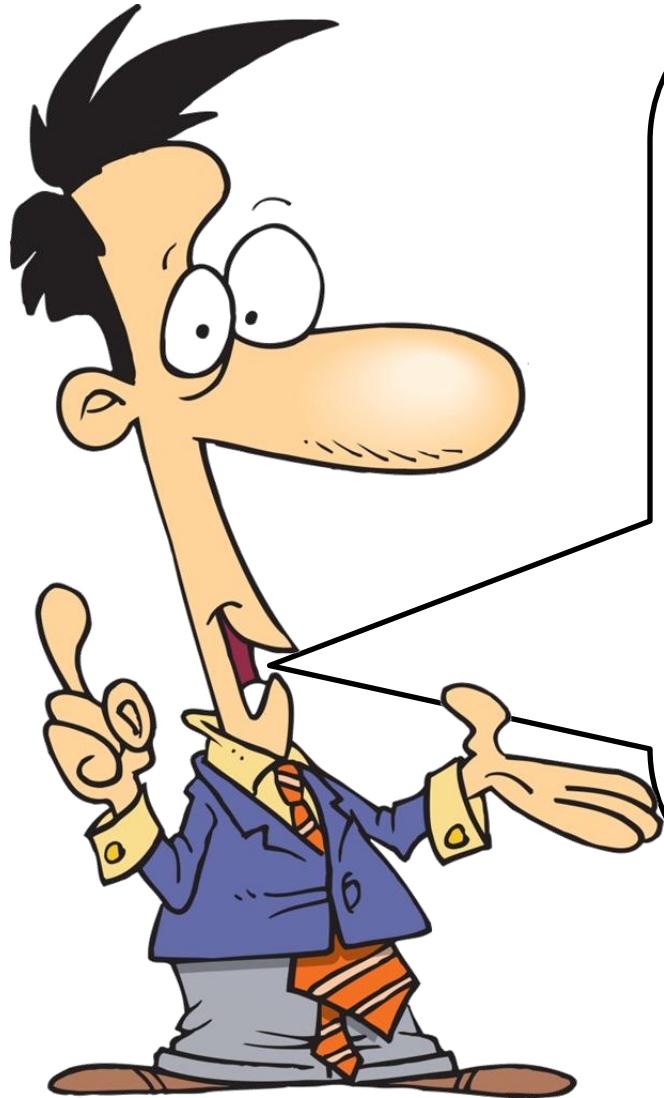
The "Naturalism
Fallacy" Fallacy!

The Naturalism Objection



The "Naturalism Fallacy" Fallacy is the fallacy of dismissing someone's anti-Resurrection argument as **assuming naturalism** when it **does not!**

The Naturalism Objection



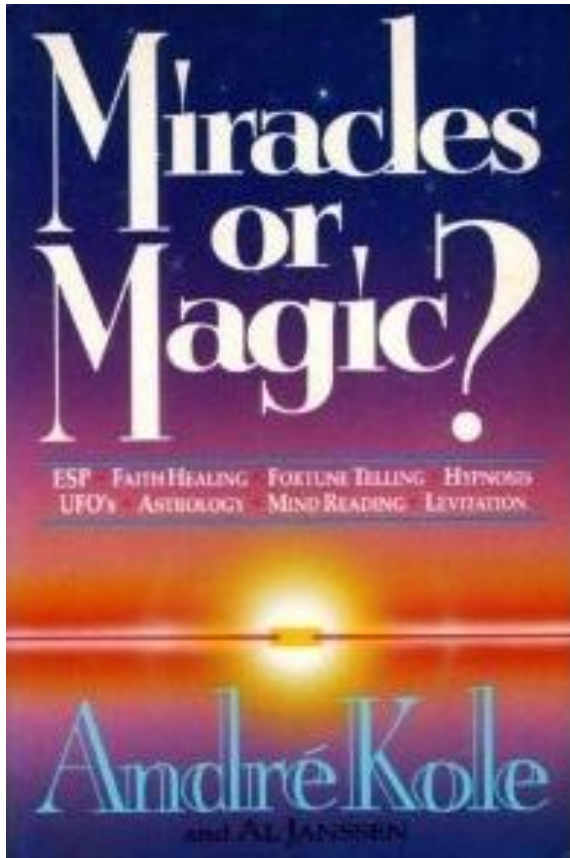
Consider the
analogy of
Andre Kole.

The Naturalism Objection



Andre Kole
World Famous Christian
Illusionist

The Naturalism Objection



André Kole
Debunker of Supernatural
Hoaxes

The Naturalism Objection

Kole was suspicious of a story he'd heard about a Liberian witch doctor raising a villager back from the dead three days after he had killed him for disobedience by shooting him with a rifle.

So Kole investigated the case for himself.



Andre Kole
Debunker of Supernatural
Hoaxes

The Naturalism Objection

Kole found that the witch doctor and villager had faked the latter's death and resurrection by:

- Loading the rifle with blanks
- Planting a balloon with pig's blood under the man's shirt
- "Burying" the man in a coffin with a trap-door so he could escape out the back and hide for three days before returning to be "raised" by the witch doctor



(Miracles or Magic? pp. 13-14)

Andre Kole
Debunker of Supernatural
Hoaxes

The Naturalism Objection

Kole's **initial** suspicion was **well-founded** because supernatural resurrection has an **extraordinarily low prior probability**.

Yet, this hardly made Kole a faithless **anti-supernaturalist!**



Andre Kole
Debunker of Supernatural
Hoaxes

The Naturalism Objection

For all Kole knew **a priori**, perhaps the witch doctor **had** raised the dead man through God's supernatural intervention.

Nonetheless, the low **prior** probability Kole assigned to this alleged resurrection was hardly **inscrutable** and, in fact, fully justified by the evidence of **Natural Theology**.



Andre Kole
Debunker of Supernatural
Hoaxes

The Criteria of Adequacy Objection



The
Resurrection
Theory alone
satisfies all the
Criteria of
Adequacy

The Criteria of Adequacy Objection



The
Resurrection
Theory alone
satisfies all the
Criteria of
Adequacy

The Criteria of Adequacy Objection

The Resurrection Theory
alone satisfies the criteria of
explanatory scope,
explanatory power,
plausibility, being less
ad hoc, and illumination!



The Criteria of Adequacy Objection

Table 5.6 Licona's Analysis of RH

	Scope	Power	Plausibility	Less Ad Hoc	Illumination
VH	FAIL	FAIL	FAIL	PASS	—
GH	PASS	FAIL	FAIL	FAIL	PASS
LH	PASS	FAIL	FAIL	FAIL	PASS
CsH	PASS	FAIL	FAIL	FAIL	PASS
CfH	FAIL	FAIL	FAIL	FAIL	PASS
RH	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS

The Criteria of Adequacy Objection

No, the "X-Man"
Theory fails to
adequately satisfy
any of these!



Cavin's Analysis of XH

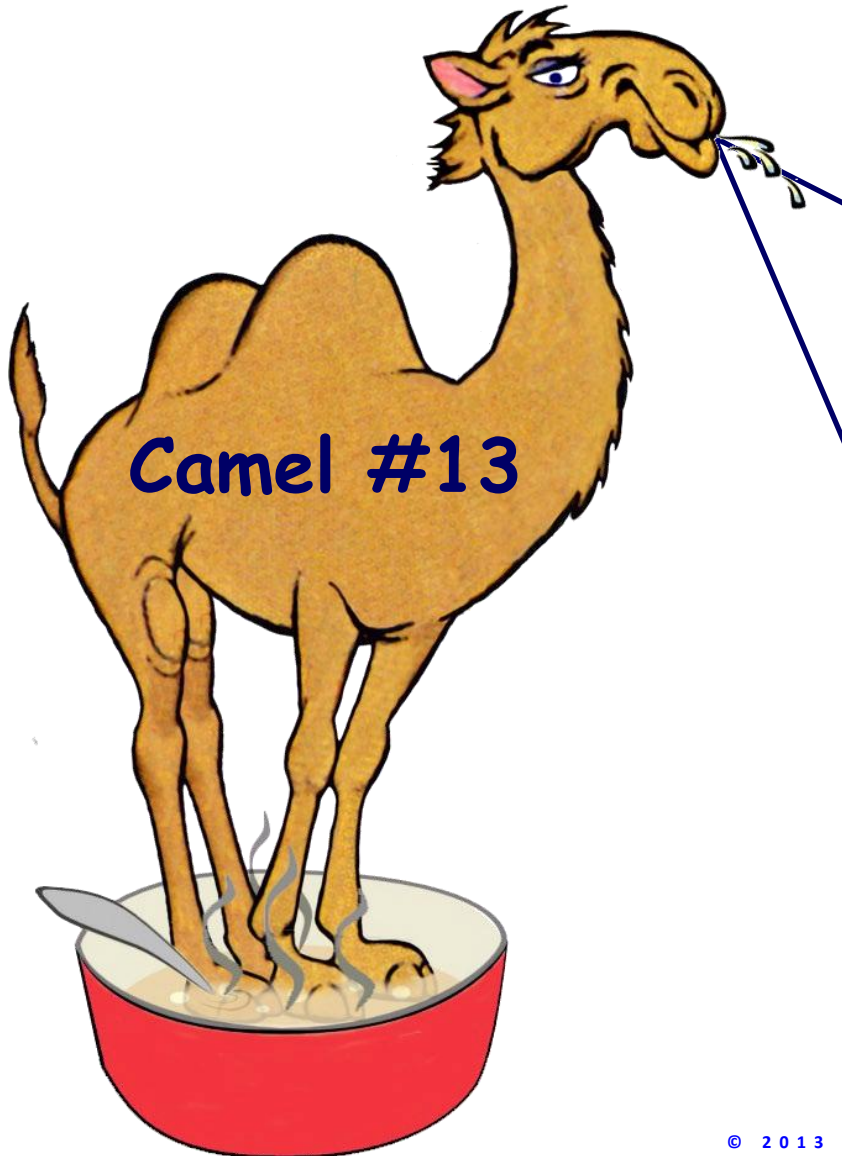
	Scope	Power	Plausibility	Non-Ad Hoc	Illumination
~XH	Very Low	Very Low	Virtually 1	Very Low	Very Low
XH	Extremely Low	Extremely Low	Virtually 0	Very Low	Very Low

The Mathematics Objection



Mathematical
Probability
Theory Cannot
be Applied to
the
Resurrection!

The Mathematics Objection



Mathematical
Probability
Theory cannot
be Applied to
the
Resurrection!

The Mathematics Objection

You can't apply
mathematics to history!
That's using the **wrong tool**.
It's like trying to find
cancer with a telescope.



The Mathematics Objection

Well, you're **ignoring**
the **fact** that it's
already been done!



The Mathematics Objection

Craig himself uses Bayes' theorem in his article, "Was Jesus Buried in Shame: Reflections on B. McCane's Proposal"!



The Mathematics Objection

Besides, the **same** reasons
you give apply **a fortiori** to
non-mathematical
approaches, e.g., Licona's
five criteria of adequacy!



The Mathematics Objection

For example, “**plausibility**”
is the same thing as **prior**
probability; and **explanatory**
power-scope is the same as
explanatory likelihood!



The Plausibility-Prior Probability Objection



Plausibility
Must be Used
as a Criterion
in Place of
Prior
Probability

The Plausibility-Prior Probability Objection



Plausibility
Must be Used
as a Criterion
in Place of
Prior
Probability

The Plausibility-Prior Probability Objection

You can't appeal to
prior probability. You
have to substitute
"plausibility" instead!

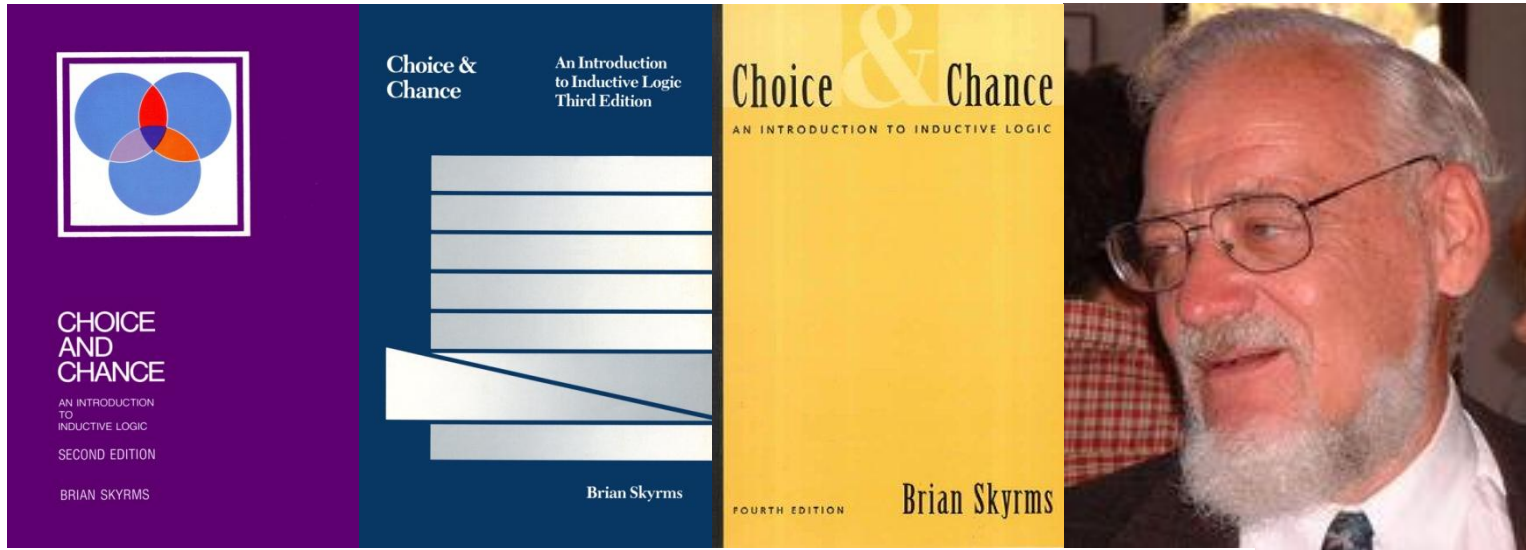


The Plausibility-Prior Probability Objection

But it's been shown that **any** so-called "**plausibility**" that is not actually **probability** is **wacky** and leads to **irrational** beliefs and decisions!



The Plausibility-Prior Probability Objection



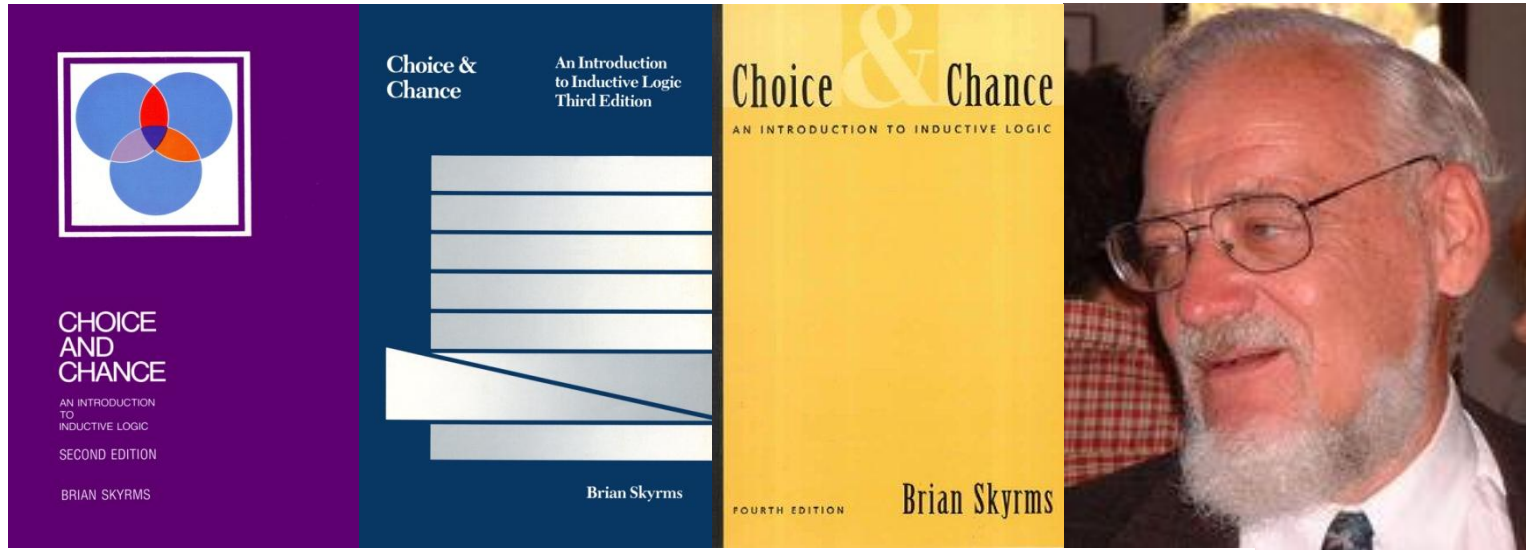
Brian Skyrms

Brilliant Inductive Logician

Choice & Chance

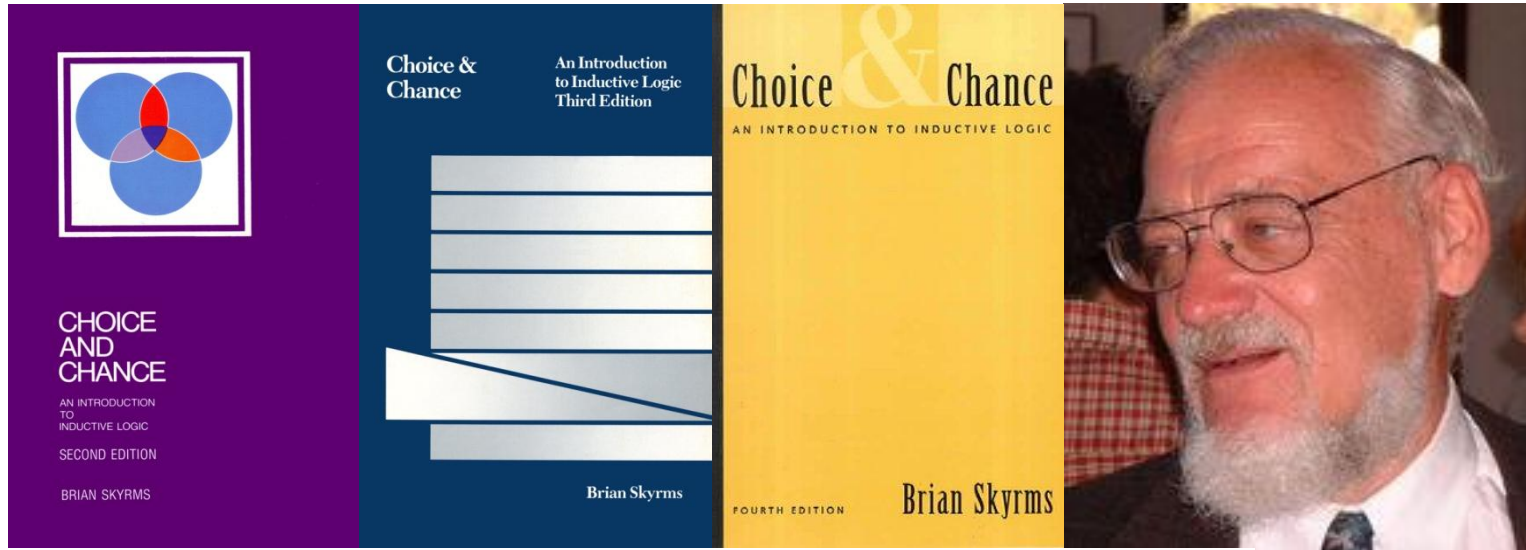
Causal Necessity

The Plausibility-Prior Probability Objection



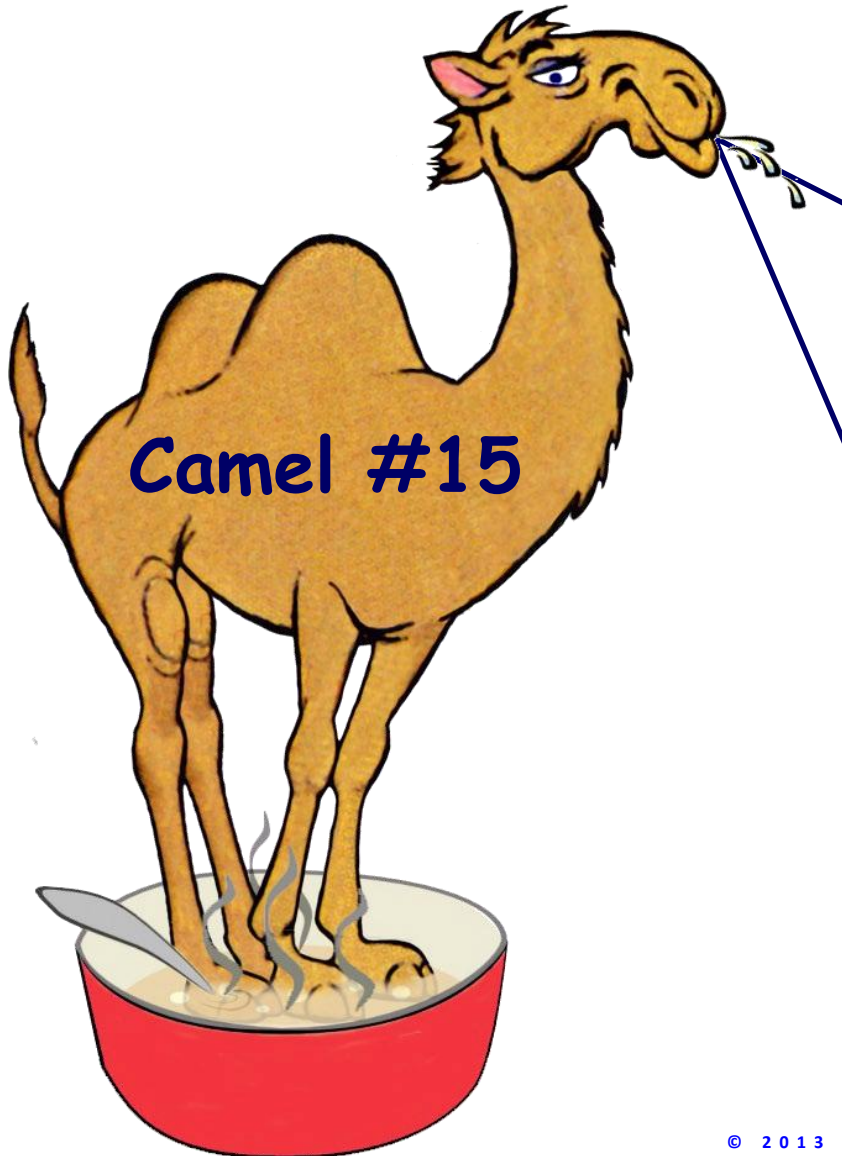
Showed that **plausibility**, to be well-behaved rationally, i.e., not “wacky,” must be **probability**, i.e., conform to the axioms of the **Probability Calculus** and, thus, **Bayes' Theorem!**

The Plausibility-Prior Probability Objection



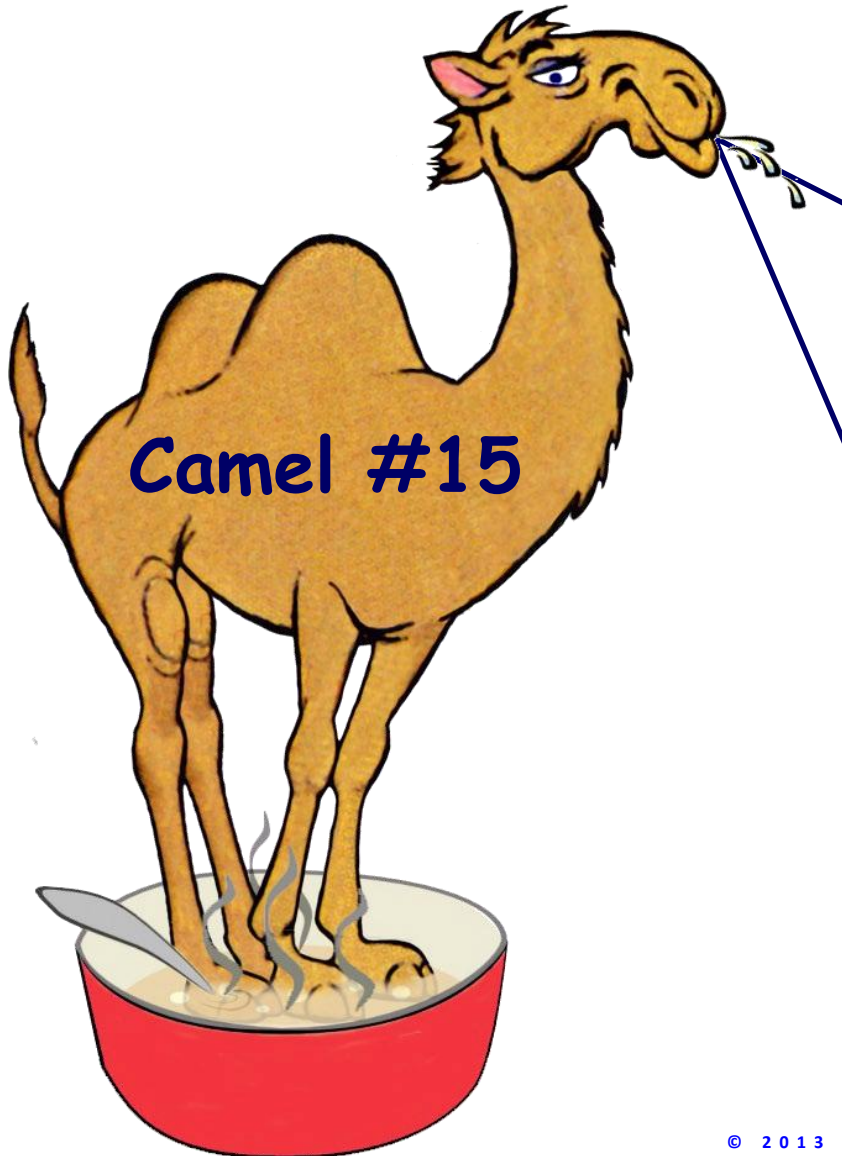
Plausibility that is **not probability** leads to the loss of those things we value—no matter what happens!

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection



**Bayes' Theorem
Theory Cannot
be Applied to
the
Resurrection!**

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection



Bayes' Theorem
Theory cannot
be Applied to
the
Resurrection!

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

Recent studies indicate
that the human brain
is "hard-wired" for
Bayesian reasoning!



The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

[Home](#) / [October 8th, 2011](#); Vol.180 #8 / Feature

The Probabilistic Mind

Human brains evolved to deal with doubt

By Laura Sanders

[October 8th, 2011](#); Vol.180 #8 (p. 18)



⌕ ⌕ Text Size

[Enlarge](#) 🔍

Lee Williams/[flickr](#)/[getty images](#)

Humans live in a world of uncertainty. A shadowy figure on the sidewalk ahead could be a friend or a mugger. By flooring your car's accelerator, you might beat the train to the intersection, or maybe not. Last week's leftover kung pao chicken could bring another night of gustatory delight or gut agony.

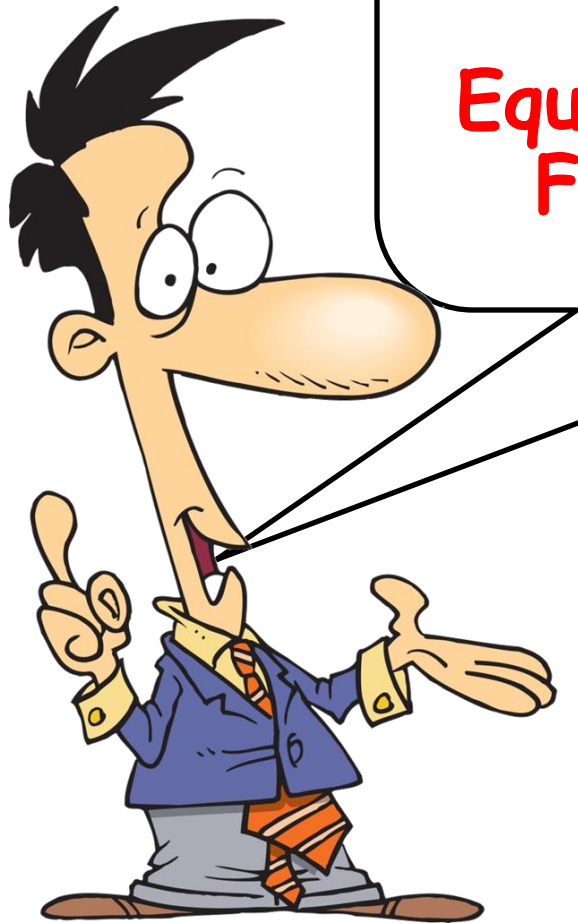
People's paltry senses can't always capture what's real. Luckily, though, the human brain is pretty good at playing the odds. Thanks to the brain's intuitive grasp of probabilities, it can handle imperfect information with aplomb.

"Instead of trying to come up with an answer to a question, the brain tries to come up with a probability that a particular answer is correct," says Alexandre Pouget of the University of Rochester in New York and the University of Geneva in Switzerland. The range of possible outcomes then guides the body's actions.

A probability-based brain offers a huge advantage in an uncertain world. In mere seconds, the brain can solve (or at least offer a good guess for) a problem that would take a computer an eternity to figure out — such as whether to greet the approaching stranger with pepper spray or a hug.

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

The Anti-Bayesian
Resurrectionist is **Committed**
by Virtue of **Logical**
Equivalence to the **Bayesian**
Formulation he opposes!



The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

The anti-Bayesian resurrectionist affirms:

Given the historical evidence, it is more probable than not that Jesus rose from the dead.

but denies that formal probability theory and, in particular, Bayes' theorem, can be applied to the problem of the historicity of the Resurrection.

However, as is shown in the next several slides, the non-Bayesian affirmation is, in fact, logically equivalent to the Bayesian formulation.

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

Step 1: The Non-Bayesian Affirmation:

Given the historical evidence, it is more probable than not that Jesus rose from the dead.

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

Step 2: Paraphrase:

Given the historical evidence, it is more probable that Jesus rose from the dead than it is that Jesus did not rise from the dead.

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

Step 3: Abbreviate:

Given B & E , it is more probable that R than it is that $\sim R$.

Abbreviations:

B = our background information

E = the special evidence to be explained:
the empty tomb, the postmortem appearances
of Jesus, and the origin of Christianity

R = the hypothesis that Jesus rose from the dead

$\sim R$ = the hypothesis that Jesus did not rise from
the dead

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

Step 4: Paraphrase Again:

The probability of R given B & E is greater than the probability of \sim R given B & E.

Abbreviations:

B = our background information

E = the special evidence to be explained:
the empty tomb, the postmortem appearances
of Jesus, and the origin of Christianity

R = the hypothesis that Jesus rose from the dead

\sim R = the hypothesis that Jesus did not rise from
the dead

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

Step 5: Complete Abbreviation:

$$P(R|B \& E) > P(\sim R|B \& E)$$

Abbreviations:

$P(q|p)$: the probability of q on p

$>$: greater than

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

Step 6: Apply Bayes' Theorem

$$P(R|B \& E) =$$

$$P(R|B) \times P(E|B\&R)$$

$$P(R|B) \times P(E|B\&R) + P(\sim R|B) \times P(E|B\&\sim R)$$

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

Step 6: yields the Bayesian formulation:

$$P(R|B \& E) =$$

$$P(R|B) \times P(E|B\&R)$$

$$P(R|B) \times P(E|B\&R) + P(\sim R|B) \times P(E|B\&\sim R)$$

>

$$P(\sim R|B \& E) =$$

$$P(\sim R|B) \times P(E|B\&\sim R)$$

$$P(\sim R|B) \times P(E|B\&\sim R) + P(R|B) \times P(E|B\&R)$$

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

The Bayesian Approach beautifully accommodates, systematizes, and codifies the Criteria of Adequacy

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

$$P(R|B\&E) =$$

$$P(R|B) \times P(E|B\&R)$$

$$P(R|B) \times P(E|B\&R) + P(\sim R|B) \times P(E|B\&\sim R)$$

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

$P(R | B \& E) \leftarrow$ **Posterior Probability of R**

$P(R | B) \leftarrow$ **Prior Probability of R**

$P(\sim R | B) \leftarrow$ **Prior Probability of $\sim R$**

$P(E | B \& R) \leftarrow$ **Explanatory Power of R**

$P(E | B \& \sim R) \leftarrow$ **Explanatory Power of $\sim R$**

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

$P(R|B) \leftarrow$ **Prior Probability** of R*

*Same as **Plausibility** of R

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

$P(R|B) \leftarrow$ **Prior Probability** of R

Includes logical virtues of:

Simplicity

Modesty

Conservatism

Non-Ad-Hoc-ness

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

$P(R|B) \leftarrow$ **Prior Probability** of R:

Simplicity = $P(R)$ and thus is included in $P(R|B)$

Modesty is a function of the **content** of R
and thus is included in $P(R|B)$

Conservatism is a function of the **evidential** relation
between B and R and thus is included in $P(R|B)$

Non-Ad-Hoc-ness is an aspect of **conservatism** and
thus is included in $P(R|B)$

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

$P(\sim R|B) \leftarrow$ **Prior Probability** of $\sim R^*$

*Same as **Plausibility** of $\sim R$

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

$P(\sim R | B) \leftarrow$ **Prior Probability** of $\sim R$

Includes logical virtues of:

Simplicity

Modesty

Conservatism

Non-Ad-Hoc-ness

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

$P(\sim R | B) \leftarrow$ **Prior Probability** of $\sim R$:

Simplicity = $P(\sim R)$ and thus is included in $P(\sim R | B)$

Modesty is a function of the **content** of $\sim R$
and thus is included in $P(\sim R | B)$

Conservatism is a function of the **evidential** relation
between B and $\sim R$ and thus is included in $P(\sim R | B)$

Non-Ad-Hoc-ness is an aspect of **conservatism** and
thus is included in $P(\sim R | B)$

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

$$P(E|B\&R) = n \leftarrow \text{Explanatory Power of } R^*$$

← Explanatory Scope of R

***Includes Predictive Power, Fruitfulness, and Illumination**

Although explanatory power and explanatory scope are distinct, it is impossible to disentangle them logically since the more facts one puts into E, the lower n must be, and the greater n is, the less one can put in E

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

$$P(E|B\&R) = n \leftarrow \text{Explanatory Power of } R^*$$

↑
Explanatory Scope of R

***Includes Predictive Power,
Fruitfulness, and Illumination**

This definition of explanatory power and explanatory scope automatically includes “non-distortion” of facts to be explained—for this is just a metaphorical way of designating the degree of probability that a hypothesis confers on those facts: the more/less distortion, the less/more probability conferred

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

$$P(E|B\&R) = n \leftarrow \text{Explanatory Power of } R^*$$

↑
Explanatory
Scope of R

*Includes Predictive Power,
Fruitfulness, and Illumination

*Fruitfulness and Illumination are actually
functions of $P(E|B\&R)$ and $P(E|B\&\sim R)$ combined

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

$P(E | B \& \sim R) = n \leftarrow$ Explanatory Power of $\sim R^*$

\leftarrow Explanatory Scope of $\sim R$

***Includes Predictive Power, Fruitfulness, and Illumination**

Although explanatory power and explanatory scope are distinct, it is impossible to disentangle them logically since the more facts one puts into E, the lower n must be, and the greater n is, the less one can put in E

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

$P(E | B \& \sim R) = n \leftarrow$ Explanatory Power of $\sim R^*$

\leftarrow Explanatory Scope of $\sim R$

***Includes Predictive Power,
Fruitfulness, and Illumination**

This definition of explanatory power and explanatory scope automatically includes “non-distortion” of facts to be explained—for this is just a metaphorical way of designating the degree of probability that a hypothesis confers on those facts: the more/less distortion, the less/more probability conferred

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

$P(E | B \& \sim R) = n \leftarrow$ Explanatory Power of $\sim R^*$

\uparrow Explanatory Scope of $\sim R$

***Includes Predictive Power, Fruitfulness, and Illumination**

***Fruitfulness and Illumination are actually functions of $P(E|B \& R)$ and $P(E|B \& \sim R)$ combined**

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

The Bayesian Approach does not create problems—it merely serves to make them clear!

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

Formalizing the argument for the Resurrection by using Bayes' Theorem does not create problems, e.g., those of background information and incomplete evidence.

Formalization only serves to make these problems—problems that already exist anyway—clear.

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

The Bayesian Approach solves problems that the Anti-Bayesian approach cannot!

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

The informal, anti-Bayesian approach of McCullagh begs key questions that only the formalized, Bayesian approach can answer.

It is clear that such criteria as plausibility and explanatory scope and explanatory power must be taken into account in determining probable historicity. But why?

Only the Bayesian approach can explain why these must be taken into account via the mathematics of Bayes' Theorem.

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

The informal, anti-Bayesian approach of McCullagh is incapable of explaining how the various criteria fit/work together or when and how one criterion takes precedence over another.

In contrast, the Bayesian approach explains these with precision via the mathematics of Bayes' Theorem.

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

**The Anti-Bayesian Approach Creates Problems
only the Bayesian Approach can Solve**

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

For example, defining “**plausibility**” in terms of the number of propositions that imply a theory won't work, for two reasons:

First, there is no **objective** way of counting the number of propositions that imply a theory since propositions can be combined into any smaller number you please by the operation of **conjunction**.

Second, let P_1 through P_n be all the propositions that each imply theory T . Then every conjunction of two or more of the P_i entails T . Yet, for any such conjunction C and any P_i :

$$P(T|P_i) = P(T|C) = P(T|P_1 \& \dots \& P_n).$$

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

The Bayesian Approach shows that, to be well-defined, **Plausibility** must be Bayesian **Prior Probability!**

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

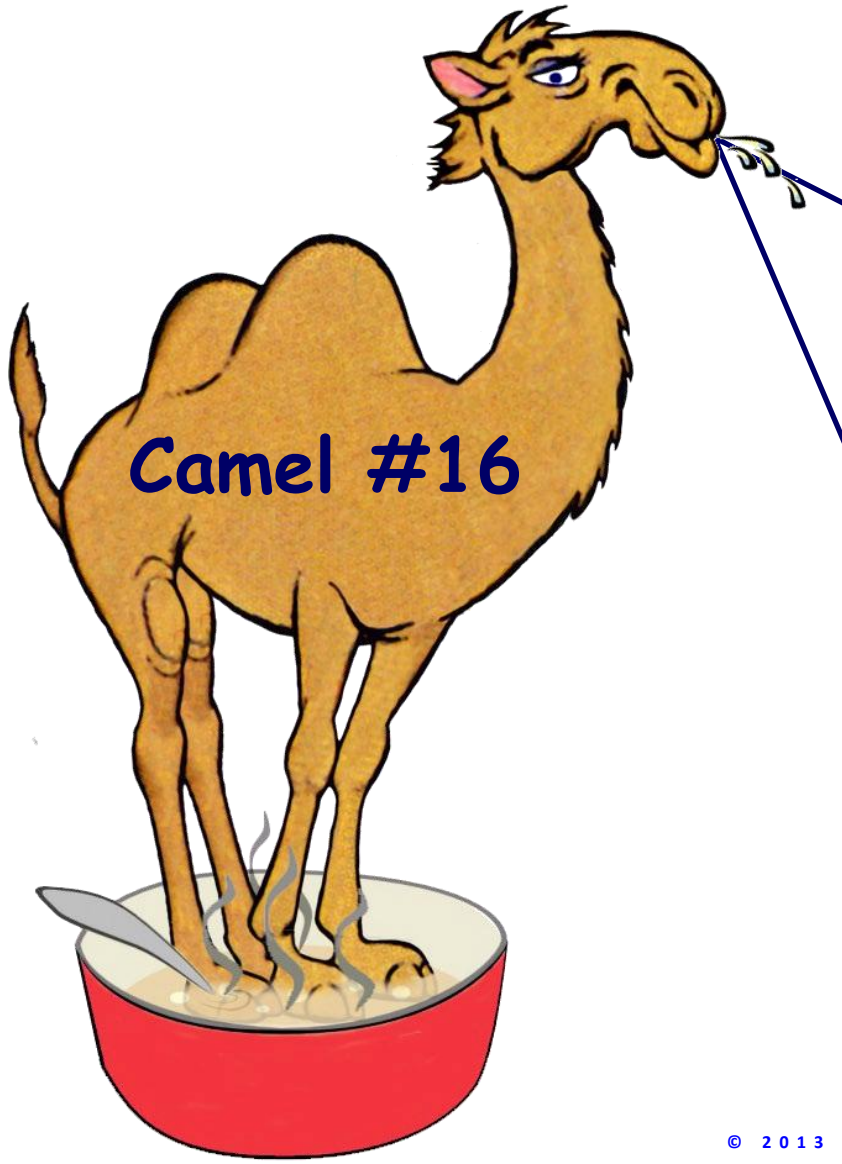
The same problems that anti-Bayesians
urge against Bayesian **Prior Probability**
arise equally for **Plausibility!**

The Anti-Bayes' Theorem Objection

Even if one assumes that **plausibility** is not **prior probability**, it is clear that all of the problems that anti-Bayesians urge against the latter—e.g., the problems of background knowledge and incomplete evidence—arise equally for the former.

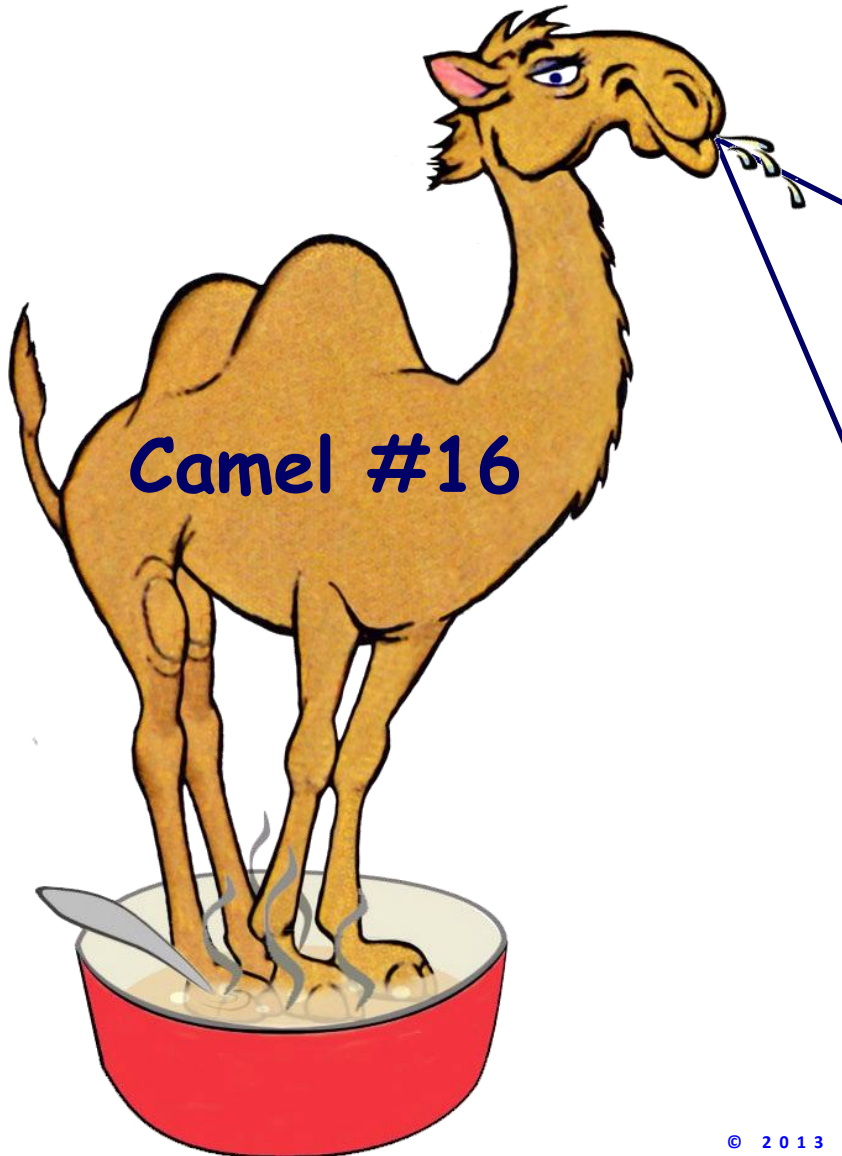
Thus, if it is true that it is impossible to determine the **prior probability** of the Resurrection, then the same is true a fortiori for the **plausibility** of the Resurrection.

The There-Are-No-Contradictions-in-the-Easter-Narratives Objection



The Skeptic
falsely holds
that there are
Contradictions
in the Easter
Narratives

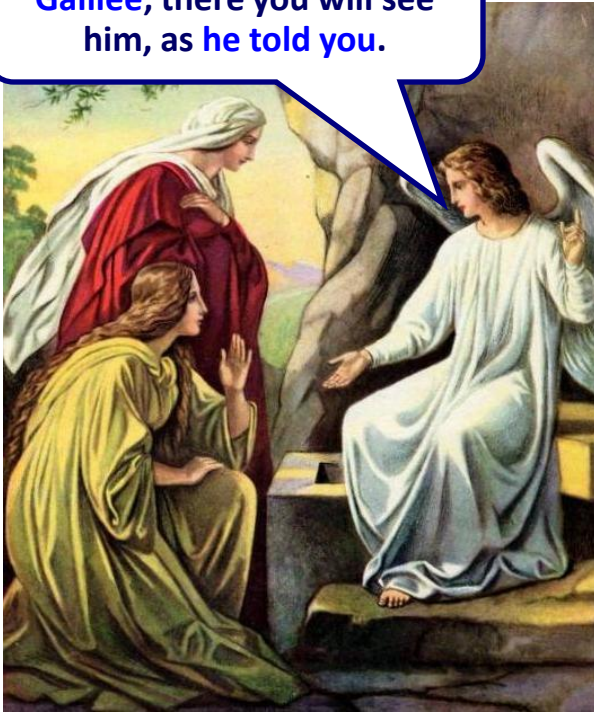
The There-Are-No-Contradictions-in-the-Easter-Narratives Objection



The Skeptic
falsely holds
that there are
Contradictions
in the Easter
Narratives

Angel(s) at The Empty Tomb

... he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you.



Mark:

Jesus told them that he would go to Galilee

Remember how he told you while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of man ...



Luke:

Jesus told them in Galilee that the Son of man ...

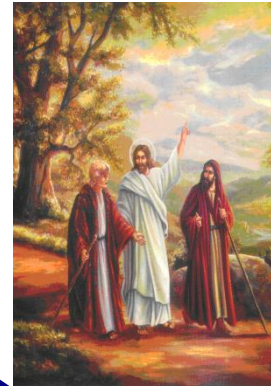
Why?
Historical? Literary?

Explanation: Pure Literary Construction!

I restrict the appearances of the Risen Christ to the greater Jerusalem area: Emmaus, the Upper Room, and the Mount of Olives.



**Luke
the Evangelist**



So I can't very well follow Mark in having the Angels order the women to tell the disciples to go meet Jesus in Galilee!

Explanation: Pure Literary Construction!



Luke
the Evangelist

Thus I changed Mark's original
"he is going before you to Galilee; there
you will see him, as he told you" . . .

. . . he is going before you
to Galilee; there you will
see him, as he told you.



Remember how he told you
while he was still in Galilee,
that the Son of man . . .



. . . to "Remember how he told you
while he was still in Galilee, that
the Son of man . . .!"

Postscript to the Debate

The Resurrection: **Bad News!**

According to most members of this audience, if Christ be raised, then Licona and most of you are going to Heaven while Cavin and **the vast majority of humanity** are going to Hell. But, it's probable that Christ was not raised, and none of us are going anywhere.

Notice

We claim no ownership of the artwork or photographs used in this document and are receiving no financial benefit from them.

We have paid a fee to the owners for permission to modify and use the vast majority of these, and the remaining few occur here in accordance with the doctrine of Fair Use.*

***Fair Use is the legal doctrine that portions of copyrighted material may be used without permission of the copyright owners if the use is: fair and reasonable, does not substantially impair the value of the materials used, and does not negatively impact the profits reasonably expected by the owners.**

© 2013 Robert Greg Cavin and Carlos A. Colombetti

All rights reserved.

May not be reproduced in any form without written permission of

Cavin and Colombetti

